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THE SONNETS OF MILTON

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MCMXXI

THE SONNETS OF MILTON

WITH INTRODUCTION & NOTES

BY

JOHN S. SMART, M.A., D.LITT.

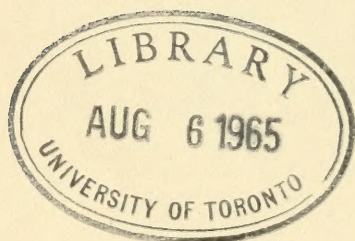
LECTURER ON ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

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THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED BY THE EDITOR
TO
WILLIAM MACNEILE DIXON
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

SURELY I perceive that sentence of Plato to be true which sayeth: 'that there is nothing better in any common-wealth than that there should be always one or other excellent passing man, whose life and virtue should pluck forward the will, diligence, labour and hope of all others, that, following his footsteps, they might come to the same end whereunto labour, learning and virtue had conveyed him before.'

ROGER ASCHAM.

PREFACE

THE only task which confronts an editor of Milton's Sonnets is exegetical. They present no serious difficulties in the text, and it has been thought unnecessary to encumber them with an *apparatus criticus*, which could give no more than unimportant and insignificant variations in spelling, obvious misprints, or readings rejected by the poet himself. The difficulty of many lines arises from their allusiveness, which it has been sought to make clear by citation of relevant passages from other works. Milton wrote from a full mind, abundant in reminiscence, and all his writing is *woven close*: sometimes the brevity of an allusion to literary or traditional knowledge is the only cause of an uncertain interpretation.

For the text there are three sources—the Editions of 1645 and 1673, and the original Manuscript, containing many of the Sonnets, although not all, in Milton's own hand or those of amanuenses, which is preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, and has been reproduced in fac-simile. In

several places where the reading given by the edition of 1673 differs from that of the Manuscript, preference has been given to the latter; and in particular the Manuscript has been followed in the order assigned to the eleventh and twelfth Sonnets, which is reversed in the 1673 volume. As the Manuscript has Milton's immediate personal authority, it may be believed to be a better guide than an edition printed long after the loss of his sight, near the very close of his life, and in some other respects defective. The order of the two Sonnets here adopted is also more logical and more natural,—beginning with the general theme, and passing to a more limited and particular application.

Much has been added to the biography of those of Milton's friends to whom certain of the Sonnets are addressed, a matter involved since his time in forgetfulness and obscurity. Their story has been simply and directly stated in the text of the book, and the documents on which it is founded, nearly all hitherto unpublished, are placed by themselves in an Appendix. The investigations necessary for this purpose have been carried on with the assistance of financial grants made by the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, to which grateful acknowledgment is made.

J. S. S.

THE UNIVERSITY,
GLASGOW, *1st November, 1920.*

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INTRODUCTION

IN the time of Milton, and for many years before, one of the most potent influences upon English culture was that of Italy, to which we owe, amongst many and various innovations, the introduction of the Sonnet. The causes of this influence were themselves various and manifold. Italian literature and art had reached their highest point of greatness; they commanded the admiration of all Europe, and their decline, although it had perceptibly begun, had not already become so visible as to emphasise the difference between the present and the past. Italy had not yet lost the dignity it acquired as the centre of European cultivation and the first of the modern nations to create a great literature in the vernacular tongue, and to raise the arts of painting and sculpture to a height unknown since antiquity.

Even the pre-eminence of the Italians in commerce and material civilisation had done much to augment their prestige; and it is not without interest to note that when English poets were imitating Italian stanzas and rimes, English traders were acquiring

the methods and technique of their business from Italian bankers and merchants. Simultaneously English architects were building palaces and mansions in the Italian style, and adorning their walls with Italian decoration.

The influence of Italian upon English literature began with Chaucer, who translated from Boccaccio and Petrarch, and caught from their works something more impalpable but more precious than any story or description—the secret of grace and dignity in poetic style. After his death there was a long interruption in our literary communication with Italy; broken in the time of Henry VIII. by the minor poets who first introduced the Sonnet into England. During the age of Elizabeth Italian was everywhere. The manner of the poets became Italianate; the Sonnet was copiously cultivated; poetic romance in the Italian way was introduced by Spenser, who owed to Tasso one of the most beautiful passages in the *Faerie Queene*¹; and Italian comedy had an influence which has not yet been fully explored upon the early works of Shakespeare.

But Milton, who was the last great poet of the age which looked to Italy for inspiration, was also its most complete and accomplished Italian scholar. The theme of his greatest work had already been made familiar as a subject for poetry by Italian writers, however original and independent his treatment

¹ Bk. II. canto xii.

actually was. His imagination was coloured by the Italian climate and scenery ; and his style was also affected by Italian models. Johnson has pointed out that one of its sources was " his familiarity with the Tuscan poets," and that the disposition of his words is often Italian : so is frequently his metrical structure.

It was also reserved for Milton to establish in England the more familiar and classical forms of the Italian Sonnet, which had been much neglected, although not wholly and entirely, by his predecessors. The Sonnet is here our special theme ; and its use by English poets cannot well be considered without reference to its subjects and methods in the country of its origin. It first appeared in Italy in the twelfth century ; it has continued there in unbroken use till the twentieth ; and the Italian poetry which has been cast into the sonnet form is without bound or limit ; infinite in its copiousness, and impressive in its value and beauty. One of the most famous of poets, Petrarch, made it peculiarly his own, and became the master of many disciples ; but the sonnet extends far outside the Petrarchian range.

In its first beginnings it was a lyrical poem, in the stricter sense of the term, being designed for a musical setting, and sung to a musical accompaniment ; but it ceased to possess such uses when it became a refined poetic composition, possessing a weight and substance of reflection for which purely lyrical verse is inadequate. The poet conveys in it a certain idea,

grave enough to give matter of thought to the reader, but brief enough to be contained, with full and perfect expression, in the compass of fourteen lines. He speaks in his own person, reveals his own emotions, and takes the reader into his confidence without reserve.

Although it was thus intimate and subjective, the sonnet also acquired a social purpose and meaning. It was frequently addressed by the poet to an individual person, and gave utterance to feelings of love, friendship, or admiration ; sometimes, although much more rarely, to hostility and scorn. Addresses of compliment to fellow-authors were composed, and answered in the same fashion by the recipients ; and on certain occasions the sonnet supplied the purpose of a poetic epistle. It is so used by Milton in the lines addressed to Lawrence and Skinner. It served also for the praise of great men and heroes, statesmen and princes.

But from the first beginning it was the favourite metre of love poetry, sometimes in single utterances, more frequently in a series of poems which commemorated the history of the writer's affection and its final issue. It was so employed by Dante and Cino da Pistoia, a generation earlier than Petrarch ; but Petrarch was the chosen master from whom later ages drew inspiration.

The love expressed was such as had not been known to Greek or Latin literature. It had come into being

during the Middle Ages, and revealed a new relationship between man and woman, which was the most original creation of the period of chivalry, and its legacy to the world. The poet's lady is the object of a humble and submissive ardour; she is far above him, in virtue of her sex, her beauty, and her goodness; he brings as gifts his praise and devotion, and asks for no reward but to be her servant. She is the light of his eyes while she lives, and at her death he is left alone in a world which has been emptied of all meaning. The love of Petrarch for Laura, a lady of Avignon, inspired poems which his contemporaries could never sufficiently honour with wonder and admiration. No other poet was more read, more cultivated, and more imitated in every country of Western Europe, during the period which has been called that of the Renaissance. The revival of Greek and Latin learning was then much in men's minds; but Petrarch gave something which was not classical in its origin, and which the Romans would have thought very strange and exotic. The sonnet was a medieval form of verse, and its subject and feeling, so far as it dealt with Petrarchian love, its most familiar theme, were also something which antiquity had not known.

The sixteenth century was the great epoch of sonnet-writing in Italy. Both Ariosto and Tasso, its two greatest authors, contributed—Tasso in very voluminous fashion; and other names gain a certain

Yet it has the "classical" firmness of structure and purity of outline, was in its time a form as traditional as elegy, and even by its frequency of use

prominence—Bembo, Tansillo, Rota, Guidiccioni, Caro, Vittoria Colonna, Michelangelo. But it would be impossible to mention all the poets who cultivated the sonnet, and their productions may be enumerated by thousands upon thousands. It had become a social institution, and its composition was one of the familiar elegancies of life.

Every person who possessed any show of accomplishment penned his sonnets. Every Italian city had its own Parnassus, a little green hill trimmed with laurel and myrtle, on which the poets sat, celebrating the charms of their ladies, and exchanging with each other expressions of friendship and regard. That the sonnets should be published was a secondary matter; they were the occupation and adornment of society; but they were published none the less in masses which are the despair of literary historians. In elegant anthologies they have come down to us, wearing still, with their gilded adornment and title-pages decked with the Muses, the Phœnix, and the plant of Apollo, a faded grace, lingering from a world which has long since vanished. It was a world of learned gentlemen, noble ladies and gracious manners—not a world to be despised or contemned.

Various opinions have been held concerning the merits of this copious and fertile composition. The severity of some critics is pronounced, and reflects, perhaps, the impatience of the historian of letters who finds himself compelled to examine so many

thousands of monotonous lines, and who judges the literature of four centuries ago too exclusively by modern taste.

In so great a mass of writing there is much commonplace and repetition of stock ideas: there is something of the kind in every literature, and the world will never have good poetry unless it is willing to bestow a silent toleration upon that which is inferior, accepting the best as a free gift, and something more than a duty performed, or occasion of censure escaped. The keenness of modern criticism acts as a discouraging blight, and suppresses poetry in its inception—the good and the bad together. Among the sonnets of the sixteenth century we can but look for the best, and recognise them wherever found.

The taste of the period also was not ours. It favoured ingenuity and clever but forced ideas—*concetti*, or conceits: what was worse, it did not dismiss a conceit when it had once served its purpose, but repeated it again and again. From the time of Petrarch downward certain poetic figures, metaphors and illustrations had their accepted currency, and flowed along the stream of verse.

The Greeks had personified Love as a youthful and winged god, who hovered in the air, aiming an arrow from a bow at the heart of the lover. Sometimes he carried, in place of the bow, a torch with which the hearts of lovers were enkindled. Eros, or Cupid, thus appeared in the Greek Anthology and the Latin

poets, in Greek sculpture and on the walls of Pompeii. He fluttered through the pages of Petrarch—a piece of classical imagination amongst so much medieval sentiment—and winged his flight through those of later sonneteers. He harboured in the eyes of the poet's lady: her eyebrows were his bow, her glances were his piercing shafts. The lady was implacable and indifferent to the effect of her own charms; her eyes enkindled the lover's heart, but her own remained as ice. He dwelt in a region of sighs and tears; and poetic ingenuity followed sighs and tears through every metaphor they might suggest. Sufficient illustration of this poetic inheritance may be found in some of the youthful sonnets which Milton composed in Italian and addressed to Emilia.

But such conventionality of utterance is no proof that a poet is insincere. It has been argued that because he employs traditional metaphors and familiar conceits, therefore his writings are a mere literary exercise, and the affection celebrated has no existence. This is the usual and sometimes the only argument adduced to demonstrate that the lady admired by a certain poet was an imaginary being.

Examination of this contention will show that it is far from conclusive. It is not impossible that a real person and a sincere emotion might be commemorated in conventional language, with fantastic ornaments that had already served other poets to praise other ladies. Poetic genius and originality

of invention are much more rare than personal feeling; and a genuine passion may find utterance in verses which have in themselves little or no literary value. Inspiration will not come at call; the poet may glide with facility into the stream of commonplace; or he may be misled by an admiration for ideals and methods of writing which have no permanence and no attraction for a later age; but he is not therefore to be dismissed as a pretender.

The problem of sincerity is complex; it varies from one poet to another, and depends in each case on a knowledge of his personal history, which is not always easy to obtain. But in many sonnets the influence of reality, sometimes tragic and affecting, is plainly stamped, in letters that cannot be mistaken. It is betrayed, as Sir Philip Sidney remarked, "by that same forcibleness or *energeia* (as the Greeks call it) of the writer."

The vast sonnet literature of Italy in the sixteenth century is now seldom explored. It has its defects of monotony, repetition, and lack of substance: it is so far removed from us in time that even its graces have lost something of their charm, and its defects stand out in high relief. But the uniformity is often broken by utterances of deep and tender feeling, and by verses which are jewels of poetic light and beauty. Even in the mass there is present everywhere an exquisite sense of style. The Italian instinct for form asserts itself in flowing, clear, and

melodious language and metre ; leaving the reader to marvel at this universality of literary accomplishment at a time when in England itself speech was still unsettled and style almost uncreated.

Such was the inheritance into which the English poets of the sixteenth century entered, and the foundation on which they built. But on its way from Italy to England the literature of the sonnet had received a great accession. The poets of France became the disciples of Petrarch and the Italians ; and a voluminous creation of verses, bearing the famous name of Ronsard and those of many minor associates, ensued. French sonnets, as well as Italian, lay open before English writers, and Ronsard, even more than Petrarch himself, became their master.

The current of literary fashion followed the same course in England as abroad. The sonnet was adopted with all its traditions and associations, and for a brief period of years its popularity had no limit. As in Italy, it served a social purpose, and passed in manuscript from hand to hand. Shakespeare, we are told by a contemporary, circulated " his sugared sonnets among his private friends." His plays sufficiently attest the popularity of sonnet-writing. Romeo was for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in ; Benedick manifested his love for Beatrice in a halting sonnet of his own pure brain. England was now familiar with one foreign custom the more, in an age

when foreign customs quickly passed into vogue. A stream of volumes began to pour from the press, very Italianate and very French in sentiment, each containing its series of sonnets by some accomplished pen. About the close of Elizabeth's reign the fashion as suddenly exhausted itself, and began to die away.

The method of procedure followed by the Elizabethan poets was varied. Some were no more than translators, who did not always acknowledge the source of their borrowed materials; and of these Lodge is the most striking example. His poetic originality is sadly to seek among the verses which he inscribed to a nymph called Phyllis. Lodge's method called for little expenditure of imagination. He selected a sonnet by Ronsard, Desportes, or Ariosto, converted it with easy fluency into English rimes, and turned the leaves of his books in search of another; giving no hint that he followed any Muse but his own. He was not alone in this simple kind of poesy; it was only too common amongst Elizabethan writers, and has been brought to effective notice by very recent research.

Other poets were more original than Lodge and essentially sincere; they were not mere bookmen, but spoke from their own minds, their poetry having its root in fresh feeling and new experience; but they clouded it over with conventional language, and mingled their own utterances with traditional

themes and figures, in a strange and fanciful web. Conceits borrowed from Petrarch or Ronsard are scattered over their pages, even when an authentic history may be plainly read between the lines. Those of Sir Philip Sidney excel all the others in value, with the exception of Shakespeare's, the most original. The latter were first published in 1609, the year after the birth of Milton, and Elizabethan sonnet-writing thus culminated and closed.

With Milton a new period began, and the English sonnet underwent a very visible change. He did not write as one of a group of sonnet-composing poets. The vogue of that form of verse was over; Sidney, Shakespeare, Daniel, Drayton, Constable, had left no successors; and the sonnet had become an abandoned literary fashion, with a change as sudden as its rise to ephemeral popularity. Milton's poetic contemporaries in England, with few exceptions, ignored it. Cowley was occupied with experiments in Pindaric odes, Waller with polishing his simple and lucid style, Carew and Davenant with masques for the court, Suckling and Lovelace with lively lyric verse. New manners reigned, and the Elizabethan sonnet was as much out of date as are now some of the literary fashions that were popular in the reign of Victoria.

Milton almost alone cultivated the sonnet in the middle of the seventeenth century; but he cultivated it with a difference. In his lines the old dialect of

the sonnet is not to be found; its sentiments, conceits, and familiar images have vanished completely away. It is only in his Italian poems that we can still trace the ancient language—another sign that they were composed in his very early youth. Two striking differences become apparent when Milton's sonnets are compared with those of his English predecessors—a much greater variety of subjects, and a new poetic manner. The sonnet was now being composed by a poet whose standards were classical; precision of utterance, careful selection of words, the simple and clear expression of definite ideas, had superseded the old abundance and vague luxuriance. Such a change was passing over English poetry in his time, and Milton was one of the heralds of the coming age.

In the form of the sonnet he also appears as a reformer, his significance in this respect being such as only a later period recognised. He departed from the prosody most familiar to his English predecessors, and aimed at a more pure and regular method, according to Italian precedent. But the prosody of the Italian sonnet, and its relation to English verse, is a subject so complex, and in many parts still so obscure, that it will be necessary to display it with some technical minuteness, before the importance of Milton's reform can be adequately shown.

II.

The construction of the poem has certain definite principles, familiar to all Italian writers, but not clearly realised by all who have used it in England. According to the usual metrical scheme, it consists of four parts—two *Quatrains* and two *Tercets*. The eight lines which form the quatrains are constructed by the use of only two rimes, which may be arranged in more ways than one. Petrarch gives the preference to the *enclosed* order, in which the rimes are arranged like those of Tennyson in *In Memoriam*, the metrical scheme being, *a b b a, a b b a*. Following his example, our poets have commonly adopted the enclosed order. Milton himself in all his sonnets uses it alone. But the Italian poets also employ the *alternate* order, with its rimes arranged as in Gray's *Elegy*: here the scheme is *a b a b, a b a b*.

That it was employed by Dante may appear by the opening quatrain of the sonnet which describes his first meeting with Beatrice:

Di donne io vidi una gentile schiera
 Quest' Ognissanti prossimo passato,
 Ed una ne venia quasi primiera,
 Seco menando Amor dal destro lato.

Petrarch also has the alternate order, as in the quatrain:

Zefiro torna, e' l bel tempo rimena,
 E i fiori e l' erbe, sua dolce famiglia,
 E garrir Progne e pianger Filomena,
 E primavera candida e vermiglia.

In Petrarch such a construction is rare ; but none the less the Italian writers who use alternate rimes freely and without hesitation form an illustrious company, amongst them appearing, of the early poets, Guido Guinizelli, Guido Cavalcanti, and Cino da Pistoia ; of the moderns, Alfieri, Foscolo, Carducci, and Pascoli. There are other variations. Petrarch, although with such infrequency that they are no more than casual exceptions, has the forms, *a b a b*, *b a b a* ; and *a b a b*, *b a a b*.

In the tercets there is much more variety. For the six lines no more than two rimes are sometimes employed ; but these may be arranged in different fashions—*c d c*, *c d c* ; or *c d c*, *d c d*. With the addition of a third rime more combinations are possible, and there are few which have not been tried ; analysis of Petrarch's lines giving the groupings, *c d e*, *c d e* ; *c d e*, *d c e* ; *c d e*, *d e c* ; *c d e*, *e d c*. But it is remarkable that the combinations which end the poem with a couplet are rare, although by no means unknown. Dante has several sonnets that close in a couplet, and so has Petrarch—the metrical scheme in all of them being *c d d*, *d c c*. But this is not the form which afterwards attracted the English poets and found special favour in the age of Elizabeth. For that we must leave Petrarch and seek in another direction.

Sir Thomas Wyatt, a courtier and diplomatist in the service of Henry VIII., reopened the literary

connection with Italy which had been almost broken off since the death of Chaucer, and became the first writer of sonnets in England. That Wyatt had true poetic feeling, a grave and thoughtful utterance, is shown by his works in more familiar lyrical verse, composed for the lute; but his sonnets have little to recommend them to the modern reader. They belong to the history of prosody, rather than that of poetry. They have no originality, and none of the personal interest which makes the peculiar value of the best sonnets. They are stiff exercises in language and verse, the substance translated for the most part from Petrarch and from lesser Italians such as Sannazaro and Serafino: all life long gone out of them. But their interest for prosody is great, and can best be illustrated by citing one in full:

My galley, charged with forgetfulness,
Thorough sharp seas in winter nights doth pass
‘Tween rock and rock; and eke mine enemy, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelty.
And every oar a thought in readiness,
As though that death were light in such a case.
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forced sighs and trusty fearfulness.
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain,
Hath done the wearied cords great hinderance,
Wreathed with error and eke with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain;
Drowned is reason that should me comfort;
And I remain despairing of the port.

The matter of this sonnet, which itself is no more than a piece of ingenuity, is wholly taken from

Petrarch ; but the verse is not. The plan of the quatrains is perfectly regular ; but the riming scheme of the tercets is *c d d, c e e* ; of which not one example is to be found in Petrarch's works. This is Wyatt's favourite metre,² the great majority of his sonnets, which are over thirty in number, being so constructed ; whilst the usual Italian forms, which he knew well, for he found them on every page of Petrarch and Sannazaro, are wholly neglected and treated as if they had never been.

We cannot explain this choice, except perhaps by the propensity of beginners to walk in the by-paths and avoid the highway ; but it may be asked at least whether Wyatt invented the variant he preferred, or found it in some now obscure Italian poet, or some occasional usage among the masters.

It is certain that Wyatt did not invent it. Proof that he did not may be found in a sonnet by Torquato Tasso, where the metrical arrangement of the tercets is identical with Wyatt's. For comparison with the English form we may quote it also :

Tu parti, o rondinella, e poi ritorni
 Pur d' anno in anno, e fai la state il nido ;
 E più tepido verno in altro lido
 Cerchi sul Nilo, e 'n Menfi altri soggiorni :
 Ma per algenti o per estivi giorni
 Io sempre nel mio petto Amore annido,
 Quasi egli a sdegno prenda in Pafò e 'n Gnido
 Gli altari e i templi di sua Madre adorni.
 E qui si cova e quasi augel s' impenna,
 E, rotta molle scorza, uscendo fuori,
 Produce i vaghi e pargoletti Amori.

E non li può contar lingua nè penna,
 Tanta è la turba ; e tutti un cor sostiene,
 Nido infelice d'amorose pene.

Wyatt's structure, with its closing couplet, thus appears in a sonnet by one of the greatest of Italian poets. Tasso, it is true, was later in date : he was born two years after the death of Wyatt ; but no influence from the English poet on the Italian is conceivable ; and Tasso followed a model which was known to his contemporaries, and can be traced back to the age of Petrarch. Fazio degli Uberti, a member of the famous Florentine house, who died in 1368, composed a series of sonnets on the Seven Deadly Sins, in which each of the Sins presents itself in turn with a discourse on its own nature. They were probably written for some dramatic occasion when the Seven Deadly Sins were impersonated on the stage. Fazio's verses were long popular, were printed in the sixteenth century, and have a place in several collections of sonnets, although their substance is medieval, and their interest curious rather than attractive. Four of the seven are composed in the metre of Wyatt and Tasso—*a b b a, a b b a, c d d, c e e*.¹

Although most of Wyatt's sonnets are written according to this scheme, he several times uses a variant in which the rimes of the tercets are, *c d c, d e e* ; and the latter afterwards found much favour with his successors. But here again Wyatt did not

¹ *Liriche di Fazio degli Uberti*, Testo critico, per cura di Rodolfo Renier, Firenze, 1883.

invent, but copied and imitated; and again an example of his original may be found in Fazio degli Uberti. Of the sonnets on the Seven Deadly Sins the last three have the tercets composed on the form, *c d c, d e e*. The same poet has also employed it in a sonnet addressed to his friend, Antonio da Ferrara, who responds with one written on the same pattern. Its use by two Italian poets of the fourteenth century is thus clearly established.

In the sixteenth century also it was not unknown. Italian poets gave countenance to the methods of Wyatt, and Italian prosodists did not withhold approval. Antonio Minturno, whose treatise on Poetic Art was published in 1563, makes a minute analysis of the sonnet, and in speaking of the tercets mentions both the schemes we have considered, with their concluding couplets. In answer to the question—"Why are there so many kinds of quatrains and tercets?" he replies that variety is pleasant, is appropriate to lyrical poetry, and gives more freedom of utterance—thus rejecting the notion of a strict orthodoxy or regularity in such composition.¹ Minturno also makes use of both Wyatt's forms in his own poetical works.

The methods we have thus traced are of peculiar interest for English prosody; for they are the source of that variety of the sonnet used by the Earl of

¹ *L'Arte Poetica del Sig. Antonio Minturno*, Venetia, MDLXIII. p. 245.

Surrey, the friend and follower of Wyatt, and afterwards by Shakespeare, who found its simple structure best adapted to his own swift and inspired creation. No perfect equivalent for it in Italian has ever been discovered; and the English poets who cultivated it made a frank assertion of independence. The familiar lines of Shakespeare will bring the method before us :

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove.
 O, no ! it is an ever-fixed mark,
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come ;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error and upon me proved, 9
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved. 9

Although the sonnet of Surrey and Shakespeare, with its alternate rimes and closing couplet, is an English invention, it was brought into existence on an Italian basis by selection and adjustment. In Italian sonnets, as has been shown, alternate rimes are legitimate and frequent, and the couplet at the close is likewise allowed. The chief novelty of the Shakespearean form appears in the second quatrain, where two fresh rimes are introduced—a licence unknown to Italian poetry, but one which

reduces the difficulty of composition, and which seemed natural to poets accustomed to English lyrical metres. In English also the concluding couplet is frequently preceded by a pause, and acquires a more emphatic use, an epigrammatic point and concision, in which a touch of novelty is also visible.

During the age of Elizabeth many types were known; but, setting aside experiments like those of Spenser, it may be said that the poets parted into two groups, according as they were disciples of Wyatt or of Surrey. The prestige of the latter is enhanced by the greatest of his followers; and the consistent adherence of Shakespeare to a single type has given it in modern eyes an appearance of authority which it did not then possess. Much more than Shakespeare, Sir Philip Sidney was the leader and example of Elizabethan sonneteers; and Sidney enrolled himself from the first in the school of Wyatt. He was a skilful and careful metrist, using a variety of constructions. In the quatrains Sidney has both the enclosed order and the alternate order. For the tercets he prefers the arrangement *c d c, d e e*, using it in more than eighty of the sonnets in *Astrophel and Stella*. But the metre of Surrey and Shakespeare appears in only one of them, the last, which stands apart from the others as an epilogue or recantation:

Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust.

Donne, who was in thought and substance the least Italianate poet of his age, also made but slight use of

Surrey's model, and preferred in his *Holy Sonnets* to follow Wyatt and Sidney—as appears by the following example :

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
 Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so ;
 For those whom thou thinkst thou dost overthrow
 Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
 From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
 Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow,
 And soonest our best men with thee do go,
 Rest of their bones and soul's delivery.
 Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
 And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
 And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
 And better than thy stroke ; why swellst thou then ?
 One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
 And Death shall be no more ; Death, thou shalt die.

Nothing can be more unlike the exquisite *bellezza* of the Italian sonnets than these lines ; but their metrical scheme is Italian. It is identical with that of Tasso's *Tu parti, o rondinella*. One of Milton's sonnets, that to Oliver Cromwell, has a similar structure.

In the mass of English sonnets before Milton experiments in the more familiar Italian schemes, those that end without a couplet, are by no means unknown. Such experiments were made by Sir Philip Sidney, and also, although on rare occasions, by Daniel, Barnes, and Drummond. The most evident attempt was that of Henry Constable ; and only the neglect of Constable's works could have made possible the theory that Milton was the first to

introduce the Italian sonnet without a final couplet into England.

Constable was not a great poet, and he was not consistent in his metrical methods, mingling sonnets of the Surrey type freely with the rest ; but he was able to escape from the narrower traditions of amorous writing, and employed the sonnet also on religious themes, his later verses being the best. Among his Spiritual Sonnets to the Honour of God and His Saints there are addresses to St. Mary Magdalene and St. Katharine, which still keep a place in anthologies. The former has true feeling, but ends in conceit :

Such as, retired from sight of men, like thee,
By penance seek the joys of Heaven to win,
In deserts make their paradise begin,
And even amongst wild beasts do angels see ;
In such a place my soul doth seem to be,
When in my body she laments her sin,
And none but brutal passions finds therein,
Except they be sent down from Heaven to me.
Yet if those graces God to me impart,
Which He inspired thy blessed breast withal,
I may find Heaven in my retired heart ;
And if thou change the object of my love,
The winged affection which men Cupid call
May get his sight, and like an angel prove.

To fix the date of this sonnet is impossible ; but Constable died in 1613, five years after the birth of Milton. His precedence is as certain as that of Sidney.

Nevertheless there is much to be said for the traditional view which ascribes to Milton the

*X Other religious sonnets:
Barnabe Barnes, Divine Centurie of Sacred
Sonnets (1595), Divine Holy Sonnets.*

introduction of the more classical Italian metres. The experiments of his predecessors were isolated and sporadic ; they set no example ; and in the oblivion that overtook the lesser authors of the Elizabethan era they disappeared from view, until brought to light again by the literary research of the nineteenth century. Milton did not follow in their footsteps, or take suggestions from them. He made a new beginning, and went direct to the fountain-head. With his profound Italian culture, he perceived the beauty of the Petrarchian method, and accepted the task of establishing it in English verse. The Shakespearean model he rejected altogether. That he recognised the Italian schemes ending in a couplet appears by their presence in the sonnet to Cromwell and in several of those composed in the Italian language itself. But in all the others, he preferred, doubtless for artistic reasons, the forms which close with two lines that do not rime together.

Milton thus placed the English sonnet on a new foundation, and set the example to later poets. He did not immediately create a school. For the sonnet a long period of neglect followed, during the age of Dryden and Pope ; but in its revival by Gray, Warton, Cowper, and a poet of genius, now almost forgotten, Thomas Russell, it was Milton who was regarded as the standard ; and his sonnets supplied the metrical basis of Wordsworth's. It is true that irregularities were frequent, Milton's example being only imper-

fectly followed ; but he remained a model of correctness which it was perilous to disregard. The Italian forms were recognised as higher in dignity and beauty than all others, and have gained in authority with the passing of time. Their acceptance has never been more complete than it is at the present day.

We are now in less danger of permitting irregularities in the sonnet ; but a new error of excessive precision has emerged, and seeks to control it by laws more rigid than any the Italians themselves have dreamed of. It has become a heresy to use the final couplet, although it possesses, as we have seen, the authority of Dante, Petrarch and Tasso ; and even the use of alternate rimes in the quatrains is avoided by many poets, with a needless sacrifice of freedom and fluency.

English poets have sometimes failed to write the sonnet in its most beautiful shape from a vague and imperfect knowledge of its actual structure. Such knowledge is to be got by a careful study of precedent, the only source of poetic rules, which should not be departed from unless with open eyes, and where success justifies the experiment. But when precedent is appealed to, let us at least know what the precedents actually are, in all their use and extension ; for, if pedantry is deplorable, inaccurate pedantry is more deplorable still.

III.

In what then, it may be asked, consists Milton's neglect of Italian example, which has been made a reproach against him? Hallam could not be reconciled to his *frequent deviations from the best Italian structure*; and Mark Pattison, in his Edition of the Sonnets, has censured him for irregularity, violation of laws, rebellion and literary anarchism. Other writers on prosody speak to the same effect.¹

The departure from Italian methods charged against Milton lies, not in the arrangement of the rimes, but in the relation of the lines to the sentences. In a typical Italian sonnet, in almost all of Petrarch's and the majority of Italian poets, the statement of ideas harmonises with the division of the poem into quatrains and tercets. A sentence, or an important subdivision of a sentence, concludes with the end of the first quatrain, another sentence or clause with the end of the second; with the opening of the tercets begins a new sentence or clause. The pauses required by the sense occur with almost perfect regularity at the ends of lines, a complete break anywhere inside a line being avoided. Poets who aimed at classical perfection have observed this system most closely, with a regularity like that of Pope.

Milton has not always departed from the method thus described. It is irreproachably observed in the

¹ Schipper, *History of English Versification*, 1910, p. 376.

sonnet on his twenty-third year, in that on the Assault intended to the City, in those addressed to Lady Margaret Ley and Sir Thomas Fairfax, and the first to Cyriack Skinner. Those sonnets certainly escape the censure of Hallam on Milton's "frequent deviations from the best Italian structure." They must be frankly regarded as classically regular.

But the sonnets to Cromwell, Vane and Lawrence, on the Massacre in Piedmont, on his blindness, and on the death of his wife, form for this purpose a different group. In these poems the divisions of the metre and those required by the thought are not brought into strict agreement; pauses occur in any part of any line; and a sentence is sometimes continued, in rapid and unbroken flow, from the second quatrain into the first tercet, the definite pause usually placed after the quatrains being disregarded.

It is evident, also, that these variations are due neither to accident nor carelessness. The sonnets where they occur are perfectly finished, with a classical exactness of their own. They may be called irregular, but their irregularity is none the less designed, and is intended by Milton for the attainment of some metrical and poetic purpose.

In the examination of Milton's prosody we cannot set these poems quite apart from his other works. As examples of his treatment of verse the sonnets stand midway between the simpler style of *Comus* and that of *Paradise Lost*, with its sentences

"variously drawn out from one verse into another," as Milton himself describes them. In his epic style he gains both beauty of sound and effective emphasis by an unexpected ending at an unusual part of the line, metre and meaning being separated or opposed, instead of being combined with monotonous uniformity.

This is one of the secrets of his later art in blank verse; but it was already applied in the sonnets before the epic was begun. Nor can its use in the former be considered without raising also the question of its beauty and appropriateness in other metres: if it be condemned in the sonnets, it may also be condemned in *Paradise Lost*, in favour of the regularity of Pope's Homer.

It is impossible to believe that in writing the sonnets Milton deliberately broke any rule which he knew to be a rule. "To that arch-rebel," says Patti-son, "rule and law were as a thread of tow, if they could not justify themselves to reason." But men may be inconsistent even in disregard of law and the desire to return to first principles in a rationalistic spirit; and Milton showed a submissive respect for critical canons founded on the classics; as appears both by the structure of *Samson Agonistes* and its preface. The Unities of Time, Place and Action are scrupulously observed, "according to ancient rule and best example," and the Greek dramatists are named as "the best rule to all who endeavour

to write tragedy." Here there is no lack of reverence for literary precedent, and no sign of desire to break away from methods which had the sanction of authority.

But Milton, we may believe, gave such reverence to the Greek and Latin classics alone. He did not conceive of the sonnet as being bound by laws, like the drama. The latter, being of classical origin, was governed by the authority of the Greeks; but the sonnet, being a modern form of verse, was subject to no classical control, and was plastic in the hands of modern poets. So Milton seems to have regarded the matter. He could not foresee that a time would come when critics would lay down a code of rules for the sonnet as rigid as the dramatic unities themselves, and judge him by legislation of which he had never heard.

Undue difficulty has also been caused by accepting Petrarch as the only standard of sonnet writing in Italian, and regarding any deviation from his method which may be found in an English poet as the creation of that poet himself. Petrarch's sonnets are placed alongside those of Milton; differences of construction appear; and it is asked why Milton thus wilfully departed from the Petrarchian model. To follow this procedure is to ignore the immense mass of sonnets produced by Italian poets of the sixteenth century, and their possible influence upon English writers. Petrarch died in 1374; Milton was born in 1608.

Between them interposed a vast tract of time, during which countless Italian authors composed and experimented. It is in this direction that we must look for the secret of Milton's departure from Petrarch, and the explanation of his supposed irregularities.

In the sixteenth century there was some reaction against Petrarch's uniformity, and a tendency to treat the sonnet more as a whole, drawing quatrains and tercets closer together in one fabric, and carrying sentences freely from one part of the poem into another. Examples of such writing may be found in more authors than one; but the poet who most directly influenced Milton was Giovanni della Casa, an ecclesiastic who became Archbishop of Benevento, and died in 1556.

In the composition of the sonnet Della Casa deliberately broke with the Petrarchian tradition of regularity and smoothness, which had been carried to excess by minor sonneteers; as long afterwards there was a similar reaction against the regularity of Pope. "The exquisite ear of the master," says a recent Italian critic, "had fixed the pauses, with a continual correspondence between the rhythm and the syntax, the sound and the thought—whence, as is natural, the monotony of his followers. It must therefore have seemed to Della Casa to be an achievement when he ventured, contrary to the pauses fixed by example and usage, to develop his periods in the sonnet from one quatrain to another, and from the

quatrains to the tercets, and to break the verse with what the French romantics called in a similar reform, *enjambements*.”¹

Della Casa's method was carefully considered. His aim is to produce new effects by some sudden and striking departure from the familiar flow of language and verse. His sentences ignore the bounds of metre, passing imperceptibly from line to line, and ending abruptly where an ear attuned to Petrarch's modulation might least have expected; the close, which may occur at any point, being weighty and emphatic. Something of the Miltonic movement and pause may be perceived in the following sonnet to Sleep, as well as something of Miltonic dignity :

O Sonno, o della queta, umida, ombrosa
 Notte placido figlio ; O de' mortali
 Egri conforto, oblio dolce de' mali
 Sì gravi, ond' è la vita aspra e noiosa ;
 Soccorri al core omai, che langue, e posa
 Non ave ; e queste membra stanche e frali
 Solleva : a me ten vola, O Sonno, e l' ali
 Tue brune sovra me distendi e posa.
 Ov' è 'l silenzio, che 'l dì fugge e 'l lume ?
 E i lievi sogni, che con non secure
 Vestigia di seguirti han per costume ?
 Lasso ! che 'nvan te chiamo, e queste oscure
 E gelide ombre invan lusingo : O piume
 D' asprezza colme ! O notti acerbe e dure !

Where the major pause vanishes, and a principal verb in the first tercet responds to its subject in the second quatrain, it is not by chance or neglect, but

¹ G. Mazzoni, *La Lirica del Cinquecento*, 1910, p. 287.

for a clear poetic purpose. Della Casa's sonnet composed during a visit to the Adriatic has this characteristic :—

Sì lieta avess' io l' alma, e d' ogni parte
 Il cor, Marmitta mio, tranquillo e piano,
 Come l' aspra sua doglia al corpo insano,
 Poich' Adria m' ebbe, è men noiosa in parte !
 Lasso ! questa di noi terrena parte
 Fia dal tempo distrutta a mano a mano ;
 E i cari nomi poco indi lontano,
 Il mio col vulgo, e 'l tuo scelto e 'n disparte,
 Pur come foglia che col vento sale,
 Cader vedransi. / O fosca, O senza luce
 Vista mortal, cui sì del mondo cale !
 Come non t' ergi al Ciel, che sol produce
 Eterni frutti ? ah! vile augel, sull' ale
 Pronto, ch' a terra pur si riconduce.

In the central passage, which declares that in the progress of destructive time the names of the poet and his friend, like the leaves of autumn fluttering on the wind, shall fall, the emphatic *cader vedransi* is set in relief by the unexpected transition from quatrain to tercet, and the sudden pause after the first words of the line.¹ This poetic effect reappears, with striking similarity, in the sonnet on the Massacre in Piedmont :

Their moans
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
 To Heaven.

In the second sonnet to Cyriack Skinner the central

¹ Compare the sonnet by Gaspara Stampa,—
 Mesta e pentita de' miei gravi errori,—
Oxford Book of Italian Verse, 199.

passage is cast in the same mould, and emphasis is gained in the same way :

Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward.

The resemblance of Milton's sonnets in structure to those of Della Casa is not here noted for the first time. It was pointed out many years ago by James Glassford, in a volume of selections from the Italian, published in 1846.

But the suggestion receives an interesting confirmation from another quarter. Among Milton's books was a copy of the *Sonnets of Giovanni della Casa*. It bore on the title-page his signature, with the date of purchase, 1629, when his age was twenty-one, and he was still an undergraduate at Cambridge ; and had been studiously and critically read, as appeared by marginal notes and corrections in Milton's hand. At one time the book belonged to the library of Richard Heber, one of the most famous of book-collectors, a brother of the poet, and a friend of Sir Walter Scott, who addressed to him one of the poetic epistles in *Marmion*. After Heber's death his collection was dispersed, and Milton's Della Casa passed through several hands, its present possessor being unknown.¹

¹ In the Catalogue of the Library of Richard Heber, printed in 1834, when the sale took place, there appears a volume containing Dante's *Amoroso Convivio*, 1529, *Rime e Prose di Giovanni*

The difficulty which has perplexed the commentators is thus removed. Milton did not start from the basis of Petrarch, and make arbitrary changes in the Petrarchian form. He was familiar with the sonnet-writers, now less famous, of the sixteenth century, and accepted the development which the poem had undergone in passing through their hands. And he was unconscious of any breach of poetic law; for the conception of law and rule still applied only to works in the Greek and Latin manner, and had not yet been extended to forms of poetry that arose during the Middle Ages in the vernacular tongues.

A group of English critics, beginning from the usual Italian practice of ending a sentence or clause with the end of the second quatrain, have refined upon this procedure by demanding at the same point a sudden change of idea. There should, in their view, be a "suspense or turn"; the tercets presenting an aspect of the subject which has not yet

della Casa, 1563, and *Sonetti di Benedetto Varchi*, 1555, bound together; with a note stating that it had belonged to Milton, and that on the first page of the *Giovanni della Casa* were the words in his handwriting "Jo. Milton. pre. 10d., 1629"; the marks at particular passages showing that he had read the Sonnets with great attention. In 1861 the book was in the possession of Mr. Arthur Roberts, and with his permission was examined by Mr. S. L. Sotheby, who reproduced the inscription in fac-simile. In Mr. Sotheby's opinion some of the notes were due to a subsequent owner, although Milton's own hand could be traced in many places. *Ramblings in Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton*, 1861, p. 124.

been in view, continuing it in a fresh light, or meeting the statement of the quatrains by something antithetical. Thus the two chief metrical divisions become, for the sense and content of the poem, two distinct paragraphs, marked in some volumes of English verse by printing them as separate stanzas.¹

This is the principle which has been called "the law of intellectual subdivision," or "the canon requiring a subdivision of thought and melody," sometimes described as the Italian principle of the *volta*. In its extreme form this notion has given birth to the theory of Watts-Dunton, in which the quatrains are compared to a flowing wave of the sea, and the tercets to the same wave returning in ebb. The theory, first proclaimed and illustrated in the *Athenæum* many years ago,² has gained more attention than it deserved, and has produced a visible effect on the verses of some modern English poets, who have been taught to regard the "suspense and turn" as the chief feature of the sonnet, and the secret of its beauty.

We need not seek to be more Italianate than the Italians, or more pure and correct than Petrarch

¹ This custom, a deplorable innovation, has no warrant in the older poets or in the Italians, who print the Sonnet either as a single complete stanza or as *four*, two Quatrains and two Tercets.

² *Athenæum*, 17 Sept., 1881; 26 Nov., 1881; 25 Feb., 1882; 1 Sept., 1883; 5 Jan., 1884.

himself. By a wide survey of Italian literature it is doubtless possible to find many sonnets in which a marked pause in the sense occurs after the quatrains, and a certain change of theme, or the presentation of a fresh view of the subject, begins with the tercets ; but it is no less possible to find others in which there is no such change of theme, but the continuous statement of a single train of thought. Examples of such continuity can be freely shown in Petrarch : one may be quoted :

Benedetto sia 'l giorno e 'l mese e l' anno
 E la stagione e 'l tempo e l' ora e 'l punto
 E 'l bel paese e 'l loco ov' io fui giunto
 Da duo begli occhi, che legato m' hanno :
 E benedetto il primo dolce affanno
 Ch' i' ebbi ad esser con Amor congiunto,
 E l' arco e le saette ond' io fui punto,
 E le piaghe ch' infin al cor mi vanno.
 Benedette le voci tante ch' io,
 Chiamando il nome di mia Donna, ho sparte,
 E i sospiri e le lagrime e 'l desio ;
 E benedette sian tutte le carte,
 Ov' io fama le acquisto, e 'l pensier mio,
 Ch' è sol di lei, sì ch' altra non v' ha parte.

Here there is no "suspense or turn" after the quatrains, but one progressive movement. The like may be seen no less clearly in the sonnet beginning :

Grazie ch' a pochi 'l Ciel largo destina,

to be found on page 151 of this volume, where thirteen lines enumerate the charms of Laura, and the only break is between the thirteenth and fourteenth. Petrarch did not hold, with the regularity needed to

establish a poetic law, to the practice of the "suspense or turn," or maintain the wave-like movement which Watts-Dunton would make essential to the writing of sonnets.¹

Allusions to the Italian principle of the *volta* are equally unfounded. In the works of Italian prosodists the word *volta* does frequently occur, but it is used with a definite technical meaning, being indeed only an equivalent for *tercet*, and nothing more. It would have been strange had the same term been familiarly used in the prosody of the sonnet, by writers so lucid and methodical as the Italians, in two entirely different senses; but by them nothing of the sort was done.

The history of its employment in England to denote a break or change in meaning between the quatrains and the tercets is a curious chapter in scholarship. The first step was taken by Francis Hueffer, in an article published in 1880 in *Macmillan's Magazine*. Founding upon a passage in Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, Bk. II. ch. 10, he laid down the doctrine that a sonnet should be divided into two sections, there being a pause "called the *volta*" after the eighth line. A new and seemingly erudite conception easily makes its way; and the notion of a pause or *volta* immediately reappeared in Watts-Dunton and

¹ Compare also the sonnets by Boiardo which begin,—

"Già vidi uscir di l' onde una mattina,"

and

"Chi non ha visto ancor il gentil viso."

Pattison. Thus launched upon the waters of learning, it has floated there ever since.

Neither Hueffer, Watts-Dunton, nor Pattison had any authority other than the passage in Dante's treatise, to which we must ascend as their original source; but Dante's words will not bear the interpretation placed upon them, and have been misapplied at every point. He is there speaking of the Canzone, not of the Sonnet; he refers to the musical setting of the poem, not to its meaning and substance; and he mentions poems which have a *volta* or transition and others which have not, regarding both kinds as equally legitimate. "See, therefore, Reader, how much licence is given to those who write Canzoni." This passage from Dante was quoted by Torquato Tasso in one of his Dialogues; and thus the word *volta*, so employed, attracted the notice of Tommaseo and Bellini, editors of one of the best Italian dictionaries, who were evidently puzzled, and dismissed it with the remark, *No longer used*.

This discussion is a digression, and perhaps too minute; but the result is plain. Milton cannot be reproached for disregarding the Italian principle of the *volta* in the sonnet; for there is no such principle.

IV.

Whilst Milton has thus been censured for imputed faults of structure, he has, as if in compensation, received credit for a supposed reform in the subject and motive of the poem. Before him, it has been said, Love was the only topic of sonneteering authors; they lamented their amorous woes in long-drawn accents, and kept within the narrow limits of one passion conceived in one way; until Milton, with a wider range of inspiration, emancipated the sonnet from this subjection to a single theme.

The honour which is his due has been too often diminished by a narrow criticism; but we may also ascribe to him an influence in this poetic field which in truth is more than he exercised. It is not the case that he found the sonnet restricted to one motive alone. Love was indeed its chief subject, and the mass of sonnets concerning ill-requited affection is so great that poetic woe is often found to be wearisome; the reader is lost in a verbal sea of amorous protestations and laments. But sonnets on other themes are far from unknown: in some poets they are only a scanty exception, but in others they are frequent and impressive, and the range of topics is wide.

Even Petrarch does not always speak of Laura: in a sonnet to a fellow author he rebukes his discouragement in the pursuit of letters and philosophy;

another friend is exhorted to draw his sword in a crusade ; another to lend the poet his copy of the works of St. Augustine ; Stefano Colonna to continue his victorious contest with the house of Orsini. Petrarch's sonnets of denunciation against the papal court, as the Babylon of the Apocalypse, are famous, and were well known to Milton.

From the sixteenth century, with its array of greater and lesser poets, there are Italian sonnets on the beauty of Nature, exquisite in feeling and utterance, by Bembo, Annibal Caro, Bernardo Tasso, and Trissino ; sonnets of compliment to friends ; sonnets to the memory of great poets, like those of Michelangelo on Dante, and of Angelo di Costanzo on Virgil ; sonnets on the grandeur and fall of Rome, the desolation of the city of the seven hills, the calamities of Italy, and the loss of its freedom ; sonnets of lament for the dead ; sonnets of invective against public enemies, and, after the Reformation, against Martin Luther and other Protestant leaders.

One volume alone, that containing the copious effusions of Torquato Tasso, suffices at the first opening of its pages to overthrow the notion that the sonnet was confined to a single theme. Its contents are divided into three groups—Love Sonnets, of which there are 419 ; Heroical Sonnets, 486 ; Sacred and Moral Sonnets, 87. Of these groups the Heroical Sonnets are not only the most numerous, but for our purpose the most significant. They are poems of

compliment and praise, addressed to Popes, Kings, Cardinals, Princes, Dukes, great ladies of ducal courts; that to the King of Poland being typical of many :

Invitissimo Re, l' alto valore,
 Onde acquistate chiari e ricchi pregi,
 Sovra a tutti altri più famosi Regi,
 Ed onde ha il sangue vostro eterno onore ;
 E quel sommo saper, che dentro al core
 Producendo real concetti egregi,
 Siede tra mille glorie e mille fregi,
 Colman di speme il mondo, e di terrore.
 Io, scorto ancor dall' uno e' l' altro lume,
 Umil v' inchino, e sacro un opra indegna
 Di Re sì valoroso e sì possente.
 Ma seguendo il benigno suo costume,
 Deh vostra Maestà renda lei degna,
 E degno il cor, ch' ho di servirla ardente.

It is known that Torquato Tasso was among the favourite poets of Milton, whose interest was increased by his acquaintance with Manso, Tasso's friend ; but even without such knowledge we might guess that the Heroical Sonnets were the model of those addressed to Sir Thomas Fairfax, Oliver Cromwell, and Sir Henry Vane.

Turning to the English predecessors of Milton, we do not find them altogether wedded to a single subject, although Love is too often the burden of their song. Surrey laments in sonnet rimes the death of Sir Thomas Wyatt and that of his own favourite squire, who had accompanied him in French and Scottish wars, and draws a moral from the life and

end of Sardanapalus, the effeminate Assyrian. There are many sonnets of compliment to friends and fellow authors, amongst them Sir Walter Raleigh's lines on the *Faerie Queene* of Spenser, and Ben Jonson's to Lady Mary Wroth. Religious reflection is expressed in the *Divine Poems* of Donne, and in such sonnets as those of Constable to St. Mary Magdalene and St. Katharine, and of Drummond on the Nativity of Our Lord and St. John the Baptist.

Milton's position among the writers of the sonnet is not due to any sudden breaking away from an outworn convention. It is due to his greatness as a poet, the wide compass of his powers, the extent of his reading, his many-sided character, and his interest in life, literature, society, politics and religion.

He was free from the two marked failings of earlier English sonneteers—indiscriminate borrowing and self-repetition. The poets of the age of Elizabeth too frequently swamped themselves with their foreign materials, translating in bulk, with a careless, flowing ease. Among the sonnets of Milton there is none in which an original is thus implicitly followed. It is true that complete originality cannot always be claimed for him. Sometimes he adopts images and symbols from earlier poetry, as he does in the sonnet to the Nightingale, with its old French fancy of the nightingale and cuckoo as the emblems of love and hostility to love. In some poems a general resemblance suggests his knowledge of previous works. The

likeness is quickly perceived when we compare the sonnet on the death of his wife with the beautiful lines of Berardino Rota, and that on the death of Mrs. Thomason with Mantova's verses. Some of the sonnets also have an opening or a closing line which is no more than a variant on a customary form. But no poem by Milton is a colourless copy, made in a merely literary way. He has a regard both for books and the immediately real event; but the inspiration always comes from the latter.

Each of his English sonnets is also distinct and individual. The first and second present an interesting contrast; for they show alternately two different aspects of Milton's mind. In the first appears the youthful poet with his eager and emotional nature, who sometimes, and especially in the intimacy of his Latin verses, bears a likeness to Keats. In the second the speaker is the Milton who has been inadequately called Puritanic, the man of elevated religious feeling and quiet concentration of purpose. When passing from one to the other there is no continuity, as in a sequence; the tone and point of view instantly change. Those which are addressed to friends vary with the person spoken to, through a wide range of character.

A traditional and familiar view of Milton shows him as a gloomy recluse, without geniality and difficult of approach. This idea is the creation of Dr. Johnson more than of any other writer; and

was reached by *a priori* notions of what a man holding his political beliefs might be supposed to be in private life. The "surlly Republican" who rebelled against his king would not reserve his surliness for politics alone. Such *a priori* methods are misleading. The details of Milton's biography, the statements of those who knew him, his poems and letters themselves, do not confirm Johnson's portrait. They show a man of cheerful instincts, open and accessible, courteous and humane.

The list of his friends, if we seek to compile such a list, increases without end. Even those whom he most valued are not always represented in the sonnets. Lady Ranelagh is conspicuously absent. But the sonnets do indicate, although imperfectly, the variety of Milton's ties and associations—his friendship with Vane, the Puritan statesman, Lawes, the Royalist musician, Cyriack Skinner and Edward Lawrence, twenty years younger than himself, whose youth was itself an attraction. Four celebrate the charm and goodness of women, but with interesting changes of tone. Lady Margaret Ley was of Milton's own age, and acquainted with the greater world; she is approached with an even friendship. The girl of the ninth sonnet, being youthful, inexperienced and sensitive, is spoken to with gentle courtesy. Katharine Thomason and Katharine Milton are lamented after death, one by the friend, the other by the husband.

There are like variations, even when the subject is almost the same. Two of Milton's sonnets are on his blindness, but one does not echo the other. In the first his calamity is still fresh, and can be met only with painful resignation; in the second it is familiar, and he now takes pride in the cause for which he had lost his sight. Three sonnets are addressed to leaders of the Parliamentary party, but again with differences. Milton asks civil liberty from Fairfax, freedom in religion from Cromwell, and from Vane for the reconciliation of both.

Written at intervals during a period of nearly thirty years, the sonnets also show the gradual shifting of mind and character that accompanies the passage of time, and gain once more in individuality and distinctness of impression. Like Petrarch, Milton became, before he closed the series, another man in part than he had been. To the presentation of the same nature in youth and later age the poems owe much of their interest, but much also to the change of literary purpose which in some gives ease and grace, and in others an epic dignity.

Such variation has been insufficiently noted by those who see in Milton only the sublime poet of *Paradise Lost* or the Republican controversialist. His hours of social ease and kindness are reflected in his sonnets. His manner is still classical, but with a Horatian tranquillity of tone, and a corresponding lucidity and perfection of style. We are

< X This line would extend the
 question for beyond the two or three

only too familiar with Johnson's critical extravagance — "Milton was a genius that could cut a Colossus from a rock, but could not carve heads upon cherry-stones." Refinement of workmanship is inseparable from all his writings ; and it is nowhere more evident than in the lines of graceful compliment to Lady Margaret Ley, the half-jesting *Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in Arms*, and the invitations to Skinner and Lawrence. Johnson's remark suggests a strenuous but rude sculptor, who laboured in Egyptian granite ; but Milton's touch was Attic and Florentine.

1.

O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray
 Warbl'st at eve, when all the woods are still,
 Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
 While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May.
 Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
 First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
 Portend success in love. Oh ! if Jove's will
 Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
 Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
 Foretell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh ;
 As thou from year to year hast sung too late
 For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
 Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
 Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

This beautiful sonnet is one of Milton's earliest works. The poet himself, who has observed the chronological order, whenever it can be tested, in the arrangement of his sonnets, places it before that on his twenty-third birthday ; and in its tone the poem resembles the Seventh Latin Elegy, which he composed at the age of twenty-one. There is little force in the suggestion that it was written during his stay at Horton, which assumes too hastily that rural sights and sounds then became

familiar to him for the first time. During his walks in the open country near London, which are mentioned in his Latin verses, the nightingale may have been heard ; and it still sings in the gardens of Cambridge.

According to the symbolism employed by the poet, the nightingale is the Bird of Love, whose note is propitious to the lover, whilst the cuckoo is the Bird of Hate, and its sound is ominous of disappointment. This conception is not of popular origin, but bears rather the stamp of the literary mind. Before Milton it had been accepted by earlier writers, and had the authority of an old poetic tradition, whose origin is lost in medieval antiquity.

Milton's immediate source, as has been often noted, was the poem entitled *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, once attributed to Chaucer, and published with his works until a recent date, but now transferred on manuscript authority to his contemporary Clanvowe. It is so graceful and charming that we may regret the absence of other works from the same pen. After celebrating the beauty of May, the month of flowers and lovers, the poet writes :

But as I lay this other night wakinge,
I thoghte how lovers had a tokeninge,
And among hem it was a comune tale,
That it were good to here the nightingale
Rather than the lewde cuckow singe.

And then I thoghte, anon as it was day,
I wolde go som whider to assay
If that I might a nightingale here ;
For yet had I non herd of al this yere,
And hit was tho the thridde night of May.

At daybreak he goes forth into a wood amongst the fair flowers, where the birds sing their gayest notes in honour of the season ; he falls softly asleep, and in his dream hears the note of the cuckoo, that sorry bird.

He listens with dismay, and reproaches the untimely singer.

And as I with the cuckow thus gan chyde,
I herde, in the nexte bush besyde,
A Nightingale so lustily singe
That with her clere vois she made ringe
Through-out al the grene wode wyde.

' A ! goode Nightingale ! ' quod I thenne,
' A litel hast thou been to longe henne ;
For here hath been the lewede Cuckow,
And songen songes rather than hast thou ;
I pray to God that evel fyr him brenne ! '

There follows a debate, in the medieval manner, between the nightingale and the cuckoo, on love and its service, which are praised by the former, slighted and rejected by the latter ; until the poet himself starts up and drives the cuckoo away. In gratitude the nightingale vows to sing for him all the month, and promises a future reward.

I thanked her, and was right wel apayed ;
' Ye,' quod she, ' and be thou not amayed,
Though thou have herd the Cuckow er than me.
For, if I live, it shal amended be
The nexte May, if I be not affrayed.'

The poet speaks of the good fortune brought by the nightingale, and the evil omen of the cuckoo's song, as a *tokening* and a *common tale* among poetic lovers. To trace this *common tale* to a remoter stage, we must pass over to France, the fruitful source of romantic conceptions from which the English poets freely drew.

The amorous French writers of the fourteenth century abound in symbolism suggested by birds and their song, and attach to the nightingale and cuckoo the same significance as Milton. An illustration of this fancy appears in Eustache Deschamps, the contemporary of Chaucer, who sent to the latter a copy of his works,

together with some complimentary verses. In one of his numerous ballades Deschamps relates that when he awoke on the first of May, the beginning of the sweet season, and would fain have done service to Love, there was no nightingale to be heard, but only the song of the cuckoo.¹ He lamented that he was thus summoned to hatred instead of love, and received from Pity some consolation.

Mais pour mon deuil un pou aneantir
 Me dist Pitez : Ne laisse a estre gay ;
 L'en voit souvent son contraire avenir,
 Amours deffault, ne le temps n'est plus vray,
 Esté est froiz, Yver chaut ; je ne sçay
 Dont sont ores tel contraire venu,
 Car l'en oit poy rossignol, papegay,
 Fors seulement que le chant du cucu.

A longer and quainter poem, which carries the same association of ideas almost to the beginning of the fourteenth century, is *La Messe des Oiseaux*, by Jean de Condé.²

It is a strange mixture of the simple and the artificial. Jean de Condé dreams upon a night in May, and finds himself in a forest under a pine tree, his heart delighted with the singing of birds. A parrot, messenger of love, announces the coming of Venus, in whose honour service is about to be done. Venus arrives, ascends her throne, and bids the nightingale begin the song, the other birds joining with it in chorus. But, while the nightingale is singing, another bird commands it to be silent : it is the cuckoo, which to many a man has done great harm. The birds drive it away in anger ; but the cuckoo returns in spite and flies among them, uttering its displeasing

¹ *Œuvres Complètes d'Eustache Deschamps*, Paris, 1882, tom. iii. p. 296.

² *Dits et Contes de Baudouin de Condé et Jean de Condé*, Bruxelles, 1867, tom. iii. p. 1.

cry. A great murmur arises, and the intruder is pursued by the hawk, until it takes refuge in the hollow of a tree. After the service is finished, the birds demand vengeance on the cuckoo, but are dissuaded by Venus, with the argument that the culprit has but done after its kind *il est de mauvaise nature*.

Jean de Condé's verses lack much in substance and form, and their tone is child-like; but they illustrate the poetic idea which afterwards appears in Eustache Deschamps and Clanvowe, transmitted by the latter to Milton himself.

- l. 1. O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray
Warbl'st at eve,—

The nightingale often appears in Italian sonnets and canzoni, and sometimes with a conventional opening on which Milton's first line is closely modelled; cf.

O rosignuol, che 'n queste verdi fronde
Sovra 'l fugace rio fermar ti suoli,— *Bembo.*
Bel rosignuol, che 'n su le fronde vaghe
D'una fiorita e ricca valle assiso
Apri a' tuo' accenti intorno il Paradiso,
E fai ch' indi ogni duol tra noi s' appaghe,—
Giacomo Cenci.

- l. 2. When all the woods are still.—Cf. the lines in Milton's Fifth Latin Elegy, composed at the age of twenty,—

Jam Philomela, tuos, foliis adoperta novellis,
Instituis modulos, dum silet omne nemus.

The resemblance gives some support to the view that the sonnet is also a very early work.

- l. 4. the jolly Hours.—The πολυγηθές Ὁραὶ of Homer, *Iliad*, xxi. 450.

In the mythology the Hours are a group of goddesses, like the Muses and the Graces, in whom times and seasons are personified, especially those that are propitious and happy. At dawn, when the chariot of the Sun is about to mount the sky, they lead forth and harness the steeds, and wait

upon the car. So they are described by the classical poets ; and so also they appear in the beautiful picture at Rome by Guido Reni. As goddesses of Spring, they preside over the opening year and bring flowers of many hues, when the Zephyr blows. In this character they appear in Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo*, 80-82.

Milton thus imagines the Hours, here and elsewhere. Cf.

Along the crisped shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring ;
The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
Thither all their bounties bring,
That there eternal Summer dwells.

Comus, 984-988.

The birds their quire apply ; airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on th' eternal Spring.

Paradise Lost, IV. 265-268.

[2, 3, Canzone, 4, 5, 6 ; see Sonnets in Italian, p. 133.]

7.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year !
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom show'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near ;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,

Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven :
All is, if I have grace to use it so
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

Milton reached the close of his twenty-third year in December 1631. In the manuscript at Trinity College, Cambridge, the sonnet appears in his own hand, along with two copies of a letter, roughly drafted and much corrected, which was addressed by the poet to a friend unknown.

From the terms of the letter itself it appears that his correspondent had remonstrated with Milton on his aimless way of life, and had counselled him to enter on a regular profession, specially advising the Church. Milton defends the course he has adopted, but denies that it is aimless or idle. It is not too much love of learning that is at fault, or that he has given himself up to dream away his years in the arms of studious retirement. He has not forgotten the commandment of Christ that all should labour while there is light, or the terrible seizing of him that hid his talent. But it is rather a sacred reverence that deters him, and doubt how best to proceed, "not taking thought of being late, so it give advantage to be more fit." He hints at the devotion of his life to poetry, could but the way appear more clearly. "Yet that you may see that I am something suspicious of myself and do take notice of a certain belatedness in me, I am the bolder to send you some of my nightward thoughts some while since, because they come in not altogether unfitly, made up in a Petrarchian stanza." The Sonnet follows.

1. 5. Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near.

Milton had a very youthful appearance. Long after the date of this sonnet, he wrote in the *Defensio Secunda*,—"Though I am more than forty years old, there is scarcely any one to whom I do not appear ten years younger than

I am." His apparent youth may have been connected also with some slowness in arriving at maturity, of which he was also conscious, and to which he repeatedly alludes. In this Sonnet he confesses that in "inward ripeness" he feels himself lagging behind others of his own age. In *Lycidas* also he regrets that sad occasion has compelled him to compose once more before ripeness has come.

With whom did he compare himself when he spoke of "some more timely-happy spirits" who had reached maturity before him? We must look for a young poet whose fame was already well known to Milton; and the name which seems most appropriate is that of Thomas Randolph. He was Milton's contemporary at Cambridge, and had already much reputation for wit and poetic power. His brilliant little piece, *Aristippus*, had been performed at the University and published in 1630; and in 1632 he produced *The Jealous Lovers*, which was acted at Trinity before the King and Queen, and received with great applause.

The early death of Randolph cut short a life full of promise. His works were published posthumously in 1638, with complimentary verses prefixed by his admirers, who claim for him an early and precocious maturity of mind. One of them writes,—

In meaner wits that proverb chance may hold,
That they who are soon ripe are seldom old;
But 'twas a poor one, and for thee unfit,
Whose infancy might teach their best years wit.

That Milton was familiar with Randolph's poems before their publication may be inferred from some curious similarities of expression in *Comus* and *L'Allegro*.

- l. 11. To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of
Heaven.

Pindar, in the Fourth Nemean Ode, has a similar passage,—"But whatsoever merit King Fate has given to me, I well know that Time in its course will accomplish what is destined." The parallelism was pointed out by Lewis Campbell, *Classical Review*, October, 1894.

8.

When the assault was intended to the city.

Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in Arms,
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
If ever deed of honour did thee please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee ; for he knows the charms
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the Muse's bower.
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground ; and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the power
To save th' Athenian walls from ruin bare.

Milton's manuscript at Cambridge gives the title, *When the assault was intended to the city*, with the alternative, *On his door when the city expected an assault*, the latter being deleted. Neither title appears in the printed editions.

At the beginning of the Civil War, London found itself exposed to attack by a Royalist force, which, if it had taken the town, might have finished the struggle at a blow. The battle of Edgehill was fought on October 23, 1642. It has been called a drawn battle, but the military advantage remained entirely with the king. Essex withdrew his army towards Warwick, and for a time disappeared from the scene, leaving the road to London open and undefended. The Royalist army, which was better led, seized the occasion and marched on the capital. In London there was alarm and excitement,

heightened by the news of devastation by the Royalist cavalry, who pillaged wherever they came. On November 12 a Parliamentary force was defeated at Brentford, which was taken and sacked. No one doubted that London itself would meet with a similar fate, should it fall into the enemy's hands.

Meanwhile the Parliament was making rapid preparations for defence. Earthworks were thrown up and trenches dug to cover the approaches, and the trained bands were called out. Four days after Edgehill a meeting was held at the Guildhall, and speeches were made by the Earl of Holland, Lord Saye and Sele, and Lord Wharton, who exhorted the citizens to meet the approaching peril.¹ "You see what is threatened against you; no less than the destroying of the city, your persons, and the preying upon your fortunes," said Holland. "Their intentions are," said Saye and Sele, "that this rich glorious city should be delivered up as a prey, as a reward to them for their treason against the Kingdom and the Parliament."

The trained bands were reinforced by the remnants of Essex's army, which had succeeded in reaching London in time, and on November 13, the day after the fall of Brentford, an army of 24,000 men was drawn up in order of battle on Turnham Green, facing the advancing Royalists. Both forces hesitated to attack, the Royalists being inferior in numbers and short of ammunition, the Parliamentary troops indecisively led; and towards evening Charles gave orders for retreat. The Royalist army withdrew, and the fall of London became a disappointed hope for one party and a danger averted for the other.

It may be believed that the sonnet was actually composed during the period of alarm, and before the retreat from Turnham Green on November 13. While

¹ Eight speeches spoken in Guildhall upon Thursday night, Octob. 27, 1642. *Thomason Tracts*.

suspense and anxiety prevailed around him in the city, Milton, with his inflexible composure, remained calm and detached, and converted the moment of peril into a theme for slightly playful verse.

But the suggestion that the sonnet was actually placed on the door of his dwelling, to placate some Royalist commander, need not be taken seriously: we are in presence of a poetical situation, not of a practical expedient.

l. 1. Colonel.—The word came from the French; and both in French and English it is found in early authors with two spellings, *Coronel* and *Colonel*, indicating alternative pronunciations. Modern English has adopted one pronunciation with a slight change, and retained a spelling which suggests the other. Milton gives the word three syllables, as in French. Cf.

This Honourable Lord, this Colonel,—

Massinger, *A New Way to pay Old Debts*.

Act III. Sc. 2.

l. 10. The great Emathian conqueror,—Alexander the Great. Emathia was a district of Macedon, but the name was used poetically for Macedon itself. Ovid speaks of Alexander as *dux Emathijs*. After Greece had been reduced to a state of subjection, Alexander invaded Thrace and marched as far as the Danube. His prolonged absence led to a false report of his death; the Greeks thought the time propitious for the recovery of their liberties; and the Thebans rose in revolt, and besieged the Macedonian garrison in the citadel. Alexander suddenly reappeared in Boeotia, assaulted the city, and took it by storm. The inhabitants were slaughtered, the survivors sold into slavery, and Thebes razed to the ground, "temple and tower,"—a blow which struck terror into the whole of Greece. It is said that Alexander spared only the house once occupied by Pindar, and showed favour to his descendants; but the story rests on doubtful authority. In literature it became a subject of familiar allusion.

l. 12. the repeated air,—the repetition of the air, a Latinism. Cf. "After the Tuscan mariners transformed," *Comus*, 48; "never, since created man," *Paradise Lost*, Book I. 53.

l. 13. sad Electra's poet,—Euripides. After the fatal battle in the Hellespont in which the Athenian fleet was destroyed, the Spartans, with their allies, the Thebans and Corinthians, closed around Athens and besieged it both by land and sea. The city was forced to surrender, and was only spared from destruction on very hard terms. Later tradition ascribed its preservation to a romantic circumstance mentioned by Plutarch in his *Life of Lysander*:

"And some state that the proposal was made in the congress of the allies that the Athenians should all be sold as slaves; on which occasion Erianthus, the Theban, gave his vote to pull down the city, and turn the country into a sheep-pasture; yet afterwards, when there was a meeting of the captains together, a man of Phocis singing the first chorus in Euripides' *Electra*, which begins,

Electra, Agamemnon's child, I come
Unto thy desert home,

they were all melted with compassion, and it seemed to be a cruel deed to destroy and pull down a city which had been so famous and produced such men."

9.

Lady, that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunned the broad way and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen
That labour up the hill of heavenly truth;
The better part, with Mary and with Ruth,
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.

Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light
And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure
Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss at the mid-hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, Virgin wise and pure.

The date of this sonnet can be determined within certain limits. It was placed by Milton, both in the manuscript and the printed volumes, after *Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in Arms*, which was written in November 1642; and it was included in the collection of poems published in 1645.

It is not in any way a love sonnet. The poet is addressing a girl who is still very young—in the *prime of earliest youth*, with the kindness and encouragement of an elder friend. The words which offer the key to his meaning, and to the occasion when the poem was written, are:

They that overween,
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,

The girl to whom he speaks had been the subject of reproof or asperity, and had made the poet the confidant of her distress; for it is impossible that Milton should have mentioned such a circumstance had she not herself informed him of it: to do so would have been an incredible breach of good taste. That some one "fretted at her growing virtues" can only mean that in a narrow spirit she had been thought precocious and priggish. Although he employs the plural, it is more probable that he refers to a single person and incident.

In the sonnet he offers her, with much delicacy of address, an expression of sympathy and a poet's praise to redeem the ill opinion she has met with in her little world.

The lady of this sonnet is not mentioned by any of Milton's biographers. She belonged, we may believe, to a family with which he was well acquainted, and with which he stood on the footing of a relative or intimate friend, which alone could make possible so confidential a relationship.

The sonnet has more allusions to Biblical story than any other of Milton's, in the mention of Mary, sister of Martha, who sat at Jesus' feet, Ruth the Moabitess, the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Milton's friend had received a pious education, and was familiar with the Scriptures.

It is possible, although the conjecture does not admit of proof, that she was one of the daughters of Katharine Thomason, to whose memory another sonnet is dedicated. Her age in such a case could hardly have been more than ten or twelve, and perhaps it was less. With an almost Wordsworthian feeling and sentiment Milton is here speaking to a child.

1. 3. And with those few art eminently seen
That labour up the hill of heavenly truth.

The contrast between the easy way of vice and the toilsome upward path of virtue is familiar in ancient literature, the *locus classicus* being Hesiod, *Works and Days*, l. 287-292,—“ Evil may be attained abundantly and with ease; smooth is the way, and it dwells very near; but in front of virtue the immortal gods have placed sweat; long and steep is the way to it, and rough at first. But when one has reached the summit, it is then easy, in spite of its hardness.” But Milton blends the classical image of virtue as a steep mountain with that of the Gospel,—“ Wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: . . . strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”—Matt. vii. 13, 14.

It is less evident why the broad way to destruction is also called *green*. The expression is not in the Bible, but

is apparently of mediæval origin. Roger Ascham, in the *Toxophilus*, with which Milton was familiar, has the following: "The nurse of dice and cards is wearisome idleness, enemy of virtue, the drowner of youth that tarrieth in it, and, as Chaucer doth say very well in the Parson's Tale, *the green pathway to hell*." But Ascham has quoted from memory, and in the Parson's Tale the word is not to be found. Cf. Shakespeare's "primrose path of dalliance."

10.

To the Lady Margaret Ley.

Daughter to that good Earl, once President
Of England's Council, and her Treasury,
Who lived in both unstained with gold or fee, —
And left them both, more in himself content ;
Till the sad breaking of that Parliament
Broke him, as that dishonest victory
At Chaeronea, fatal to liberty,
Killed with report that old man eloquent ;
Though later born than to have known the days
Wherein your father flourished, yet by you,
Madam, methinks I see him living yet ;
So well your words his noble virtues praise
That all both judge you to relate them true —
And to possess them, honoured Margaret.

James Ley, the *good Earl* of this sonnet, had a prosperous career as lawyer and judge. After holding several inferior offices, he became Lord Chief Justice in 1622 ; and in that capacity presided over the House of Lords during the trial of the Lord Chancellor, Francis Bacon, on charges of corruption, and pronounced the sentence after Bacon's admission of guilt. During his later years

he was in favour with Charles I., was created Earl of Marlborough, and held in succession, although for brief periods, the offices of Lord High Treasurer and Lord President of the Council. He retired from the latter post in December 1628, and died on March 14, 1629. His monument, with recumbent figure and eulogistic Latin inscription, still stands in the church of Westbury.

Lord Marlborough had a numerous family, but towards the close of his life only two daughters, of whom Lady Margaret was the elder, remained in his house, and were specially provided for by his will. The fact goes to confirm the sonnet, which suggests that her association with her father had been peculiarly close and affectionate. She was "the staff of his age, the very prop."

In December 1641 Lady Margaret Ley married John Hobson of Ningwood in the Isle of Wight, whose family had been settled there since the time of Henry VIII. He was a Captain of trained bands, and in 1629 had been one of a deputation from the Isle of Wight which visited London to petition that the defences of the island should be strengthened, as war was threatening with France. Hobson and his wife resided in Aldersgate Street, and thus were near neighbours of Milton, who then lived in the same thoroughfare. Their friendship with the poet, which was cordial and intimate, is mentioned by Edward Phillips, his nephew and biographer,— "This lady, being a woman of great wit and ingenuity, had a particular honour for him, and took much delight in his company, as likewise Captain Hobson, her husband, a very accomplished gentleman."

Although Lady Margaret's family adopted the Royalist cause, her husband's sympathies were with the Parliamentary party. When the Civil War broke out, he volunteered for service, and became Lieutenant-Colonel of the Westminster Regiment; he was attached to Sir William Waller's army, and was present at the first

siege of Basing House and the battle of Alton, December 13, 1643, in which the Royalists were defeated. His name soon afterwards disappears from the list of that regiment; but at a later date he is spoken of as Colonel Hobson.

Lady Margaret Hobson died in the prime of life. Her husband survived her, married again, in seventeenth century fashion, and died in 1657.

1. 5. Till the sad breaking of that Parliament
Broke him,—

The dissolution of Parliament in 1629 was accompanied by tumultuous scenes, and marked a complete breach between Charles I. and the Parliamentary leaders, and the beginning of eleven years of arbitrary government. At the last sitting the Speaker, on rising to adjourn the House, was forcibly held down in his chair by Holles and Valentine, while a resolution protesting against the policy of the king was adopted. A proclamation dissolving Parliament was issued two days after, and Sir John Eliot and other members were sent to the Tower. From Milton's allusion it appears that the news of these events reached Lord Marlborough on his deathbed, and was believed by those about him to have hastened his end.

There is no other mention of this incident, and the epitaph on Marlborough's tomb ascribes to him a peaceful decease from the weakness of old age. But after the lapse of so many years Milton would hardly have connected his death with the dissolution of Parliament without some suggestion from Lady Margaret herself.

1. 6. that dishonest victory,—a victory not glorious but shameful: a Latinism, *dishonest* being used as *inhonestus*. Pope in *Windsor Forest* writes:

A dreadful series of intestine wars,
Inglorious triumphs and dishonest scars,

his original being Virgil's *inhonesto vulnere*, *Aeneid*, vi. 497.

l. 7. Chaeronea.—When the Macedonian power under Philip threatened the liberties of Greece, the common danger brought about an alliance between the Athenians and their ancient enemies, the Thebans. The armies of both states met the Macedonian forces on the field of Chaeronea, where a monumental lion still commemorates the battle, and were utterly defeated. The Greek cities fell under the power of Philip and Alexander, and never again had more than a nominal independence.

l. 8. Killed with report that old man eloquent.—

It is said that the aged orator, Isocrates, was so overwhelmed with grief by the disaster at Chaeronea that he resorted to voluntary starvation, and died four days after the battle, on the day when the slain were buried. The tradition is doubted by Sir Richard Jebb, who points out that there is no authority for it earlier than Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the age of Augustus; and also that the third epistle of Isocrates, which is probably genuine, was written after Chaeronea and addressed to Philip of Macedon himself.

Jebb suggests, with much plausibility, that Milton may also have remembered the fate of Eli, the high priest, whose death was caused by tidings of the battle in which the Hebrews were defeated by the Philistines and the ark of God was taken. Eli was ninety-eight years old,—the same age as that ascribed to the Athenian.

l. 14. And to possess them, honoured Margaret.—

At least three Italian sonnets close with a similar line.
Cf.

Come virtù di stella Margherita. *Dante.*

Preziosa e mirabil Margherita. *Tasso.*

Preziosa e celeste Margherita. *Claudio Tolomei.*

11.

*On the detraction which followed upon my writing
certain treatises.*

I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs
By the known rules of ancient Liberty,
When straight a barbarous noise environs me
Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes and dogs ;
As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs
Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,
Which after held the Sun and Moon in fee.
But this is got by casting pearl to hogs,
That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
And still revolt when Truth would set them free.
Licence they mean when they cry Liberty ;
For who loves that must first be wise and good :
But from that mark how far they rove we see,
For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood.

After the meeting of the Long Parliament and the beginning of the Civil War there was an outburst of discussion on matters to be reformed both in Church and State, when men were, as Milton writes, " disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, even to a rarity and admiration, things not before discoursed or written of." He threw himself into the stream of debate, and produced a series of prose works, in which the doctrine of Liberty is upheld in all things, civil, religious, and domestic.

The immediate occasion of the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and *Tetrachordon* was the prominence given to marriage in his thoughts by his own unfortunate union with Mary Powell, and their subsequent separation ; but we are informed by his first biographer, whose

information is reliable, that the subject was already familiar to his thoughts, and that his opinions had already been matured by much reading and consideration.¹

Milton's conception of Marriage is at least clear. It was instituted, he believes, before all other purposes, for affectionate society and as a remedy against solitude and sadness; "a meet and happy conversation is the chiefest and the noblest end of Marriage"; it should bring comfort, cheerfulness and communion of mind. Even relaxation from arduous affairs and the severity of study is not forgotten. "We cannot always be contemplative," he remarks, "but have need of some delightful intermissions, wherein the enlarged soul may leave off a while her severe schooling, and like a glad youth in wandering vacancy may keep her holidays to joy and harmless pastime." Married life is sometimes to be led in the spirit of *L'Allegro* rather than of *Il Penseroso*.

But an unhappy marriage may fail to realise these aims and hopes. Husband and wife may find themselves unsuitably mated; they may find no true love, sympathy and fellowship, but only aversion and mutual displeasure of a settled kind. There may be, as Milton remarks in one place, "a powerful reluctance and recoil of nature on either side, blasting all the content of their mutual society," and, as he says elsewhere, "a perpetual unmeetness and unwillingness to all the duties of help, of love and tranquillity." In such a case the truth of the situation should be recognised, and husband and wife should be allowed to part with wise and quiet consent. Milton would leave the decision to themselves, stipulating only for a public declaration of the circumstances "in the presence of the minister and other grave selected elders."

¹ "The Earliest Life of Milton," *English Historical Review*, 1902, p. 103.

It would be an exaggeration to say that his views met with nothing but hostility. His own preface to *Tetrachordon* shows that his first pamphlet had received serious consideration in several quarters. Some thought it well reasoned and thought out, but asked for a fuller discussion of Scriptural passages bearing on the subject. Others, with the inexhaustible appetite of their age for authorities and citations, asked for a more ample supply of extracts from the opinions of learned men. But elsewhere there was nothing but ridicule or violent opposition. The attitude of the ordinary man of the world is manifested by James Howell, who in his *Familiar Letters* has dismissed Milton in a summary manner :

“ But that opinion of a poor shallow-brained puppy, who upon any cause of disaffection would have men to have a privilege to change their wives or repudiate them, deserves to be hissed at rather than confuted ; for nothing can tend more to usher in all confusion and beggary throughout the world.”

While such views were being expressed around him, it was more disappointing to Milton to find his ideas repudiated, in emphatic words, by the spokesmen of the Puritan party. Preaching at St. Margaret's, Westminster, before both Houses of Parliament, Herbert Palmer, a member of the Assembly of Divines, mentioned among doctrines to which the State should allow no toleration the new theory of Divorce, *of which a wicked book is abroad and uncensured, though deserving to be burnt, whose author hath been so impudent as to set his name to it and dedicate it to yourselves.*¹ Other recorded utterances are to the same effect, and Milton found himself cast into a *world of disesteem*. It was not the disdain of men like Howell which suggested the sonnet, but the allies of yesterday who had rejected his strange application of the faith in freedom.

¹ Masson's *Life of Milton*, vol. iii. p. 263.

l. 4. Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes and dogs,—

Early writers on natural history, who shared the taste of their age for moralising and symbolism, dwelt on the moral and immoral qualities which were typified by birds and animals. The Owl was the emblem of ignorance, of those who love the darkness rather than the light. The Cuckoo represented ingratitude, from its habit of expelling the young of its foster-parents from the nest; and, more strangely, it also was the type of vanity and boasting, because in its cry it constantly repeats its own name. Ulysses Aldrovandi, an Italian naturalist, seldom fails to improve the occasion in this way. The Dog, he writes, is the symbol of quarrelsomeness and detraction. As dogs bark at a stranger, so detractors, when they read some new work, find fault with the author for what they do not understand, and thus seem to be both Zoili and barking dogs.¹

l. 5. As when those hinds that were transformed to
frogs

Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,—

Ovid relates that when Latona, with her new-born twins, Apollo and Diana, was fleeing from the wrath of Juno, she came into the country of Lycia, and, suffering from thirst in the intense heat, she beheld a lake of clear water, and approached to drink of it. A band of countrymen who were near forbade and hindered her, unmoved by her appeal on behalf of her infants, and added threats and reviling. As a punishment they were transformed into frogs.

Metamorphoses, vi. 331-381.

l. 11. Licence they mean when they cry Liberty,—

The distinction between *Liberty* and an irregular and pernicious freedom called *Licence* was familiar to Roman political thought. During Cicero's exile his enemies, led by Clodius, caused his property to be confiscated, his house on the Palatine destroyed, and its site dedicated to the goddess of Liberty, whose statue was erected there. Having

¹ Aldrovandi, *De Quadrupedibus*, p. 518.

been recalled to Rome, Cicero pleaded for restitution and denounced the statue set up by Clodius as that of Licence rather than Liberty: *simulacrum non libertatis publicae sed licentiae collocasti*. Elsewhere he complains of the expulsion of his household gods and the intrusion of the false Liberty in their place: *vexati nostri Lares familiares: in eorum sedibus exaedificatum templum Licentiae*.¹ A similar antithesis may be found in Livy, who speaks of aristocratic youth corrupted by wealth, which preferred its own licence to the liberty of all; and of others who asked for liberty, or rather for licence, if the truth were told.²

At the Renaissance, when Roman political philosophy revived, with everything else that was classical, the writers of Italy combined it with the direct knowledge of affairs in their own Republics to form a body of political reflection which influenced the whole of Europe. Machiavelli argues that true liberty exists only in a state in which good laws and good order are firmly established; but such states are rare; and most Republics alternate between servitude and licence. The name of liberty is used alike by the ministers of licence, who are the popular party, and by those of servitude, who are the nobles, both desiring to escape from obedience to laws and rulers.³ At a later date the antithesis of Liberty and Licence was revived by the spectacle of the French Revolution, suggesting a sonnet to Alfieri and an epigram to Goethe.

l. 12. For who loves that must first be wise and good.

Cf. "Liberty hath a sharp and double edge, fit only to be handled by just and virtuous men."—Milton's *History of Britain*, bk. iii.

¹ *De Domo Sua*, 51; *De Legibus*, ii. 17.

² Livy, iii. 37; xxxiv. 2.

³ Machiavelli, *Istorie Fiorentine*, bk. iv.

12.

A book was writ of late called *Tetrachordon*,
And woven close, both matter, form, and style ;
The subject new : it walked the town a while,
Numbering good intellects ; now seldom pored on.
Cries the stall-reader, " Bless us ! what a word on
A title-page is this ! " and some in file
Stand spelling false, while one might walk to Mile
End Green. Why is it harder, sirs, than *Gordon*,
Colkitto, or *Macdonnell*, or *Galasp* ?
Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek,
That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.
Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheek,
Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
When thou taught'st Cambridge and King Edward
Greek.

After the first attacks on Milton's theory of Divorce, he published a new pamphlet to fortify his doctrine by consideration of Scripture and the opinions of learned men ; discussing the four passages of the Bible which are authoritative on the subject, found in the Books of Genesis and Deuteronomy, the Gospel of St. Matthew, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

With fanciful allusiveness the book was entitled *Tetrachordon*—the word being a technical term in music which signified a system or combination of four notes. However familiar it may have been to Milton, himself a student of Music, the son of one composer and the friend of another, it puzzled the uninitiated ; for its application to the work could not be perceived without a knowledge both of Music and of Greek. Hence arose

the bewilderment of lay readers, which the poet comments on. The sonnet is one of Milton's few humorous pieces, and shows the influence of Latin Epigram.

l. 4. Numbering good intellects.—Cf. "And as Alexander Borgia was wont to say of the expedition of the French for Naples, that they came with chalk in their hands to mark up their lodgings, and not with weapons to fight; so I like better that entry of truth which cometh peaceably with chalk to mark up those minds which are capable to lodge and harbour it than that which cometh with pugnacity and contention."—Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, bk. ii.

l. 5. the stall-reader.—The shops and stalls of book-sellers were chiefly in St. Paul's Churchyard, around the walls of the Gothic cathedral which perished in the Great Fire. Readers who haunted the stalls gained a superficial knowledge of new books without the expense of buying them. Martial mentions the idlers who loitered in the portico of Romulus and glanced casually at the poet's verses, when not occupied with more important matters.—*Epigrammata*, xi. i.

l. 7. spelling false,—interpreting amiss. Cf.

'The drift of hollow states, hard to be spelled.'

Sonnet to Sir Henry Vane.

l. 7. Mile End Green.—Mile End was originally marked by the first mile-stone on the Roman road to Colchester and the eastern part of Britain, which left the city at Aldgate, and was the outward limit of London.¹ A walk to Mile End was a walk to the furthest end of the town.

l. 8. Why is it harder, sirs, than Gordon,
Colkitto, or Macdonell, or Galasp?

The Civil War had made Englishmen acquainted with many Scottish names, both of Cavaliers and Covenanters,

¹ Gomme's *Governance of London*, p. 105.

which seemed strange and harsh, and were made more so by mispronunciation and misspelling. Those of Gordon and Macdonald were brought into note by the campaigns of Montrose, the Royalist army having officers who belonged to both clans. Colkitto, *i.e.* *Coll Ciotach*, or 'left-handed Colin,' was a familiar title given to one of the Macdonalds, who acted as Montrose's lieutenant. Masson points out that the same chief might also be called Gillespie; but there is no reason to believe that Milton had heard of the circumstance, or had it in his mind when he wrote the sonnet. A Covenanter and member of the Assembly of Divines, George Gillespie, was the most conspicuous bearer of the name, which is much mutilated by the poet, and not by him alone:—a certain "Mr Galaspy" preached before the House of Commons in January 1657.¹

Milton's motive in selecting such names is not to satirise the character and actions of those who bore them, but to reproach, in a jesting manner, the Londoners who freely uttered such strange vocables. It is the scholar and stylist who speaks, not the politician.

l. II. That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.

In his treatise on Oratory, Quintilian lays down, with easy copiousness, precepts for the cultivation of a good style. Besides teaching the classical virtues of clearness, perspicuity, and simplicity of expression, he discusses the choice of words for reasons of euphony, giving the preference to such as are pleasant in sound, as well as immediately intelligible; some words, compared with others, being *honestiora*, *sublimiora*, *nitidiora*, *jucundiora*, *vocaliora*.² Uncouth proper names of foreign origin were liable to objection because of their harshness of sound, and were avoided by fastidious authors; as we learn from Martial, who was himself a Spaniard by birth and sensitive to Italian criticism. He declares that he will not shrink from uttering the hard names of his native land, and claims,

¹ *Diary of Thomas Burton*, vol. i. p. 360.

² Bk. viii. 3.

after enumerating not a few, to have found one even harder in Italy itself :

Haec tam rustica, delicate lector,
Rides nomina ? rideas licebit,
Haec tam rustica malo, quam *Butuntos*.

Epigrammata, iv. 55.

1. 12. Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheek,
Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,—

Sir John Cheek, one of the most distinguished of English humanists, was the first Professor of Greek at Cambridge, and afterwards tutor to Edward VI. His services to the cause of learning are commemorated with affection by his pupil, Roger Ascham.

" For by the great commodity that we took in hearing him read privately in his chamber all Homer, Sophocles, and Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Isocrates, and Plato, we feel the great discommodity in not hearing of him Aristotle and Demosthenes, which two authors, with all diligence, last of all, he thought to have read unto us. And when I consider how many men he succoured with his help and his aid to abide here for learning, and how all men were provoked and stirred up by his counsel and daily example, how they should come to learning, surely I perceive that sentence of Plato to be true which sayeth : ' that there is nothing better in any commonwealth than that there should be always one or other excellent passing man, whose life and virtue should pluck forward the will, diligence, labour, and hope of all others, that, following his footsteps, they might come to the same end whereunto labour, learning, and virtue had conveyed him before.' "—*Toxophilus*.

But the introduction of the New Learning into England was accompanied by much prejudice and hostility. Many men in that age, which has been thought so propitious to such studies, *hated not learning worse than toad or asp*,—but as much as they hated either. Ascham speaks of " blind buzzards, who in late years, of wilful maliciousness, would neither learn themselves nor could teach others anything at all."

On this theme Sir John Cheek has also left his own testimony. The Erasmian pronunciation of Greek, which he taught to his students, was censured by Bishop Gardiner,

and in his defence he wrote a tract in Latin, addressed to the Bishop, which has significant passages: "When the Latin language was restored, it was not restored without much commotion and indignation of mind. The Greek language was hateful to many, and is so now; and there are those who dissuade young men from its study. I fear that those who excited your mind against our pronunciation bore a grudge against its growing fame and the multitude of its students." . . . "The good men of the present age abhor the scholarly mind. They complain, they are vexed, young men lament, old men are indignant, that the defence of such things should be undertaken, which by the common consent of the learned should in a moment be expelled."—*Joannis Cheki Angli de Pronuntiatione Graecae potissimum Linguae Disputationes, Basileae, 1555, pp. 47, 78.*

13.

To Mr. Henry Lawes on the publishing of his Airs.

Harry, whose tuneful and well-measured song
 First taught our English Music how to span
 Words with just note and accent, not to scan
 With Midas' ears, committing short and long,
 Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,
 With praise enough for Envy to look wan;
 To after age thou shalt be writ the man
 That with smooth air couldst humour best our tongue.
 Thou honourest Verse, and Verse must lend her wing
 To honour thee, the priest of Phoebus' quire,
 That tunest their happiest lines in hymn or story.
 Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
 Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing,
 Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

Henry Lawes, one of Milton's most familiar friends, was much admired as a musical composer, and held rank among the musicians and singers of the court. He is described as a Gentleman of the King's Chapel, and was a member of the King's Music, an orchestra attached to Whitehall Palace, and directed by Nicholas Lanier, a man of versatile talents and activities. In 1633 Lawes was one of the musicians appointed to accompany Charles I. on his visit to Scotland, when the king was crowned at Holyrood. With other members of the King's Music, he was prominent in the Masques which were performed at Whitehall with much sumptuous decoration and scenic splendour. When Charles returned from Scotland, there was presented one of the most gorgeous of these entertainments, *The Triumph of Peace*, the dialogue and lyrics being written by Shirley. Lawes was one of the actors, and sang, it may be remarked, as a contratenor.¹

The performance of *Comus* at Ludlow Castle followed in 1634. Lawes composed the music, and himself appeared as Thyrsis, the guardian spirit disguised as a shepherd, other parts being given to his pupils, the children of Lord Bridgewater. Milton paid an exquisite compliment to his friend in the opening speech :

But first I must put off
These my sky-robcs, spun out of Iris' woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs,
That with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods.

The manuscript of *Comus* remained in the hands of Lawes, who first gave it to the press.

The Civil War ended the Masques, and dissolved the King's Music. Lawes continued his work as a teacher

¹ *The King's Musick*, edited by Henry C. de Lafontaine, 1909, *passim*. Whitelocke MSS. at Longleat, *Triumph of Peace*.

of music and a composer, following the course of events with the sentiments of an ardent Royalist. His brother, William Lawes, also a musician, fell in the service of the king at Chester. On the eve of the king's trial Lawes made a courageous and dignified avowal of attachment to his royal patron. The little volume of *Choice Psalms* which he published in 1648 opens with a dedication to Charles I., then a prisoner. After an allusion to the death of William Lawes, some of whose compositions were contained in the book, he writes: "I were unworthy such a brother, should I tender aught that is his or mine to any but our gracious master, from whose royal bounty both of us received all we enjoyed; and such an inscription would not only seem a theft and alienation of what is your Majesty's, but, which I most abhor, would make me taste of these ungrateful days."

His publications include, besides the *Choice Psalms* of 1648, three volumes of *Airs and Dialogues*, of which the first appeared in 1653. Among the poets whose lines he set to music were Waller, Herrick, Lovelace, Carew, Randolph, and Davenant. Waller also addressed to him a short poem, which may be usefully compared with Milton's sonnet. Both poets signalise his skill in setting verse so that the music accords with the meaning, instead of partly disguising it, and aids the poet in conveying his thought. Waller writes:

As a church window, thick with paint,
Lets in a light but dim and faint;
So others with division hide
The light of sense, the poet's pride:
But you alone may truly boast
That not a syllable is lost;
The writer's, and the setter's skill
At once the ravished ears do fill.

Milton's meaning is the same when he praises Lawes for his *just note and accent*.

The sonnet was first published in 1648, among other poetic tributes prefixed to the *Choice Psalms*, where it bears the heading, *To my Friend Mr. Henry Lawes*. The Civil War and opinions far asunder had not interrupted their intimacy. Two copies of it in Milton's hand, the first much corrected, appear in the Cambridge MS. Of these the first also bears the heading, *To my Friend Mr. Henry Lawes*, and the date of composition, February 9, 1645-6. The second, a clean copy, which follows on the same page, has the title, *To Mr. Henry Lawes on the publishing of his Aires*. As the sonnet was written in 1646 and the Aires were not actually published until 1653, a curious problem is here presented, which does not admit of any easy solution. It has been suggested that there was in 1646 a design to publish the Aires, which was allowed to drop, and remained for seven years in abeyance.

l. 4. Midas' ears.—Ovid relates that Midas, King of Phrygia, who preferred the piping of Pan to the music of Apollo, was punished by the god, who turned his ears into those of an ass.
Metamorphoses, xi., 146-179.

l. 4. committing,—combining, a Latinism. As an alternative reading, Milton writes on the margin of the MS.—*misjoining*.

l. 11. That tunest their happiest lines in hymn or story,—

It would have been impossible to guess what *story* is referred to without the assistance of a note, which has the distinction of being the only marginal annotation appended in Milton's lifetime to any of his poems. It appears in the *Choice Psalms*, and reads:—"The story of Ariadne set by him in music." A poem by Cartwright entitled the *Complaint of Ariadne* was set to music by Lawes, and is placed at the beginning of his first Book of Aires. Ariadne is supposed to appear in Naxos, lamenting the desertion of Theseus and her own desolation. Though Milton seems to have admired the poem and the setting, neither is now much known.

l. 13. his Casella.—Dante relates that among the souls of those who arrived on the Mount of Purgatory one came forward to greet him, and was recognised as the spirit of Casella, a Florentine musician, who had set to music some of Dante's canzoni. The poet implores Casella to sing,—“ If a new law take not from thee memory or skill in the song of love, which was wont to calm all my desires ” ; and the spirit responds by singing the canzone which begins, *Amor che nella mente mi ragiona*. Dante addresses him as *Casella mio*.—*Purgatorio*, canto ii. 76-117.

14.

*On the religious memory of Mrs. Catharine Thomason,
my Christian friend, deceased December 1646.*

When Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthy load
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.
Thy Works and Alms, and all thy good Endeavour,
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod ;
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.
Love led them on ; and Faith, who knew them best
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And spake the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge ; who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

In Milton's biography mention is sometimes made of George Thomason, a man not without note and distinction. He belonged to a family which had its home at Westham in Sussex, where we find his

brother, William Thomason, residing as a person of some local importance. George Thomason was apprenticed in London to Henry Fetherstone, a well-known bookseller and publisher, afterwards entering into business for himself and becoming, as the law required, a member of the Stationers' Company. His shop was in St. Paul's Churchyard at the sign of the Rose and Crown.

He was a man of knowledge and cultivation, and travelled in Italy to purchase books, of which he issued a printed catalogue in 1647. In the same year Milton despatched a letter to Carlo Dati of Florence, entrusting it for conveyance to a bookseller whom he describes as his intimate friend, *mihi familiarissimo*, and with whom Thomason may be safely identified.

Henry Fetherstone was also a traveller, and brought back from Venice a valuable collection of Greek manuscripts, which was bought by the Earl of Pembroke and presented to the Bodleian.¹

But Thomason's chief claim to remembrance is in the collection of pamphlets printed in London during the Civil War, which he began to gather after the meeting of the Long Parliament, and continued until the Restoration, bringing together in all more than 22,000 publications. To carry on such a work required no small perseverance, with a perception of the value his labours would have for history and posterity. After his death the collection passed through several hands, and was finally purchased by George III., and placed in the British Museum.

Several of Milton's treatises contained in it, including the *Arcopagitica*, were gifts from the poet, and bear on the title-page the words, *Ex Dono Authoris*.

Something can still be learned concerning Thomason's wife, Katharine Hutton, the friend of Milton com-

¹ Parr's *Life of Archbishop Usher*, 1686, pp. 400, 411.

memorated in this sonnet. She was the niece of Henry Fetherstone, the bookseller, to whom Thomason was once apprenticed; her grandfather being Cuthbert Fetherstone, from the county of Durham, who settled in London in the time of Elizabeth, and prospered in his affairs. His monument, which still stands in the church of St. Dunstan's in the West, in Fleet Street, has a bust showing an elderly man of rugged features and forcible personality.

Katharine Hutton was the daughter of Mary Fetherstone, wife of a certain Francis Hutton, and was left at an early age, by her father's death, to the guardianship of her uncle, from whom she acquired the love of literature. Her own knowledge must have been wide, amounting to erudition, and indicating how profoundly read the women of that age often were.

The date of Thomason's marriage with his friend's niece is not known, but it was not earlier than 1631, and not much later. They resided in St. Paul's Churchyard, at the Rose and Crown, under the shadow of the Gothic cathedral, and had nine children. Mrs. Thomason died there in December, 1646, and was buried in St. Dunstan's church near the tomb of her grandfather.

There is no other record of her life; but some knowledge of her character may be gleaned from documents written many years afterwards, when her memory was still cherished.

On the death of her daughter Elizabeth, in 1659, Dr. Edward Reynolds preached the funeral sermon, of which there is a copy among the Thomason Tracts. It contains the words: "She was, both in bodily resemblance and in moral imitation, the transcript of a gracious mother."

In 1666 Thomason himself died at Mickleham in Surrey, leaving a will which has interesting passages. He desires to be buried at St. Dunstan's in the West

beside his "late dear and only wife"; and after legacies to his children, named in order, he continues:

"I give unto my daughter, Avis Thomason, wife of the said George, my Book of Martyrs in three volumes, out of my library called my late dear wife's library. I give and bequeath unto my said daughter, Katharine Stonestreet, as a testimony of my fatherly affection unto her, out of my said library, ten volumes of books in folio, twenty volumes of books in quarto, and thirty volumes of books in octavo, such as she shall make choice of,—except the Book of Martyrs which I have given unto her formerly and the King's Bible with cuts in it, which was bound at Paris,—which King's Bible I give unto my grandson, William Stonestreet,"—aged five,—“for the cuts' sake, wherein he taketh much delight. . . . And my son George having received a large proportion of my said late dear wife's library already, I do give and bequeath the remainder of the said library unto and amongst my said children, Edward, Henry, Grace and Thomas, to be equally and proportionally divided amongst them, part and portion alike; that, looking upon them, they may remember to whom they did once belong; hoping that they will make the better use of them for their precious and dear mother's sake.”

In the edition of Milton's works published in 1673 this sonnet appears without a heading of any sort. That given above is from the Cambridge MS., which makes it manifest that Milton wrote the name as *Thomason*. At first he set it down as *Thomasin*, but afterwards changed the penultimate letter. Unfortunately, Bishop Newton, who first printed the headings of the MS., transcribed it as *Thomson*, and his error has been repeated from one edition to another to this day.

Before the word "December" are the figures "16," deleted by a stroke of the pen. It is probable that they are nothing more than the beginning of "1646," which Milton struck out when the date was half written, on deciding to state the month as well as the year. It is

not known on what day Mrs. Thomason died ; but her funeral took place on December 12.

l. 5. Thy Works and Alms, and all thy good Endeavour.

Cf. " Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." *Acts. x. 4.*

l. 14. And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

Cf. " And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Rev. xxii. 1, 17.

In theme and treatment this sonnet bears a resemblance to one by Domenico Mantova, a poet of Brescia, published in 1553.

Lieta salendo in Ciel l' alma beata
 Di quella, che qui fu com' angel vero
 Di perfetti costumi, e di sincero
 Amor verso di Dio sempre infiammata,
 Subito d' un bel cerchio accompagnata,
 Sî come degna del celeste impero,
 D' angeli fu, e dal custode altero
 Nel palazzo real' ebbe l' entrata ;
 E giunta, a se chiamolla il Re, dicendo—
 Vieni diletta mia, vieni formosa,
 Vieni colomba mia senza difetto ;
 Perche tant' alme (oltra 'l bel Coro eletto)
 Di vergini m' ai dato ; or qui sedendo
 Faticata per me sempre ti posa.

Attention was first called to the resemblance by William Davies.—*Athenæum*, 29 Sept. 1888.

15.

On the Lord General Fairfax at the siege of Colchester.

Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze,
And rumours loud, that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays
Her broken League, to imp their serpent wings.
Oh! yet a nobler task awaits thy hand ;—
For what can War but endless war still breed ?—
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

Sir Thomas Fairfax was a great military commander, but not, as Milton hoped to find him, when he composed this sonnet, a great statesman. At the beginning of the Civil War he distinguished himself by local successes in Yorkshire, and took a brilliant part in the battle of Marston Moor. The Parliament showed its trust in his star by appointing him Commander-in-Chief ; and its confidence was speedily justified by the victory of Naseby. Strategy counted for less in the battles of the Civil War than the purely military qualities of conspicuous courage and gallantry, which Fairfax possessed. At Naseby he was seen in the thick of the fight, riding bareheaded, his helmet having been dashed off by the blow of a sword, and he took the colours of a Royalist regiment with his own hand. After the victory he pursued his success with such energy and speed that

the Royalist party was crushed in every part of England, and peace was restored.

It had continued for nearly two years when the events occurred which gave occasion to this poem. The Royalists concerted a rising, which broke out simultaneously in several parts of the country. *New rebellions raised their Hydra heads*. Royalist troops appeared in the field in South Wales and Kent; and the Scots, *the false North*, who had come to an understanding with the King, invaded England, in violation of the Solemn League and Covenant, by which they had united their fortunes to those of the Parliament. All these movements were suppressed by the vigour of Fairfax and Cromwell. The latter put down the rising in Wales, and then, moving rapidly northward, met the Scots at Preston and defeated them. Meanwhile Fairfax took Maidstone, and drove the Royalists out of Kent. Crossing the Thames, they joined forces with others who had risen in Essex, and seized Colchester, a walled town, which was soon converted into a strong military position. Fairfax was unable to storm it, but established a blockade, which continued until famine had done its work, and Colchester surrendered, August 27, 1648. By this success the *new rebellions* were crushed, and peace restored once more.

From the title, and from internal evidence, it appears that the Sonnet was composed after the siege of Colchester had begun, and before the battle of Preston, August 17, the *false North* being still undefeated when Milton wrote.

With the suppression of the Royalists in 1648 the military career of Fairfax ended, and his time of obscurity began. In the affairs of the state he exercised no real influence, and within the army itself, although he continued to be Commander, power passed imperceptibly from his hands into those of Ireton and Cromwell. Fairfax continued for a time to execute

the decrees of the Army Council which had come into being, and which dictated the policy of its own General. He had no direct share in the condemnation of Charles, whom he would have spared, had it been in his power, but hesitated and acquiesced. In the following year he retired from his command, and withdrew into private life. History has few examples of a commander whose control over his troops ceased so completely in the moment of his triumph. The reorganisation of the State by the victor of Naseby, which Milton at one time hoped for, was never accomplished, nor even begun.

l. 5. Thy firm unshaken virtue.—Here *virtue* is used in the Latin sense as *valour*. Cf.

Trust to thy single virtue ; for thy soldiers,
All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

King Lear, Act V. Sc. 3.

It is held
That valour is the chiefest virtue and
Most dignifies the haver.

Coriolanus, Act II. Sc. 2.

l. 7. Their Hydra heads.—One of the twelve labours of Hercules was the destruction of the Hydra, a monster which infested the Lernæan fens, and had nine heads, of which the one in the middle was immortal. Hercules closed with the monster, and crushed its heads with his club ; but as fast as one was destroyed two others arose in its place. The hero's companion, Iolaus, coming to his help, applied burning torches to the bruised heads of the Hydra, and thus prevented their revival ; and the immortal head was buried under a heavy stone. In poetry allusions to this myth are common, *e.g.*—

Another king ! they grow like Hydra's heads,
the exclamation of Douglas at Shrewsbury, where the king had many marching in his coats. Shakespeare, *King Henry IV*. Pt. I. Act V. Sc. 4.

l. 8. to imp their serpent wings,—to *imp* was a term in falconry, which has furnished many metaphors to

English poets. If a falcon had some feathers in its wing broken, its flight became weaker and less sure; and to remedy the loss new feathers were inserted, the new being fastened with fine wire to the stumps of the old,—a process known as *imping*. In poetry to *imp* a wing is to add strength and elevation to its flight. Cf.

Of all the kings that ever here did reign,
Edward named Fourth as first in praise I name,
Not for his fair outside, nor well-lined brain,
Although less gifts imp feathers oft on Fame.

Sir Philip Sidney.

Thence gathering plumes of perfect speculation,
To imp the wings of thy high-flying mind,
Mount up aloft through heavenly contemplation
From this dark world, whose damps the soul do blind.

Spenser, Hymn of Heavenly Beauty.

l. 13. In vain doth Valour bleed
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

The state of financial confusion which prevailed under the Long Parliament is almost incredible. In order to raise funds for the expenses of the war there was a resort to wholesale confiscation. The estates of the Royalists were declared to be forfeit, but might be redeemed by submission to the new government and payment of a certain proportion of their value. A declaration of the whole extent and nature of the property was asked from each individual, with a special penalty for those who sought to conceal the existence of a house or farm belonging to them, and rewards were offered to those who would reveal such attempts at concealment; the result being that informers flourished and abounded. In the enforced sale of Royalist estates it became possible to make purchases at low rates by official connivance; and Royalists who sought to make terms sometimes found it necessary to smooth the way by judicious bribery.

Property was thus changing hands in every part of England, with many circumstances of distress and impoverishment, rapacity and extortion. Adherents of the Parliament did not escape, but complained bitterly of

assessments and impositions, and of their own losses through the confiscation of Royalist property in which they had an interest.

Milton's denunciation of this misrule may be found in an incidental passage in his *History of Britain*, where he speaks of councils and committees which *fell to huckster the commonwealth; men for the most part of insatiable hands and noted disloyalty; the ravening seizure of innumerable thieves in office.*

16.

To the Lord General Cromwell, May 1652, on the proposals of certain ministers at the Committee for Propagation of the Gospel.

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crowned Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath; yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war; new foes arise
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains;
Help us to save free Conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves whose Gospel is their maw.

In the spring of 1652, when the state of the Church was in much confusion, Parliament appointed a Committee for the Propagation of the Gospel, to arrange a settlement; and the Committee in turn proceeded to consider a scheme laid before it by fifteen Puritan

ministers, of whom the chief was John Owen, who had been Oliver Cromwell's chaplain. The most difficult question considered by the Committee concerned the limits of toleration to be allowed to religious teaching of a voluntary or propagandist character, outside the official instruction of the clergy who were to be established by the State. It was admitted, alike by the Committee and by Owen and his brethren, that some such toleration there must be ; but the divines were specially consulted about the checks to be imposed, and the tests to be employed in disqualifying voluntary teachers who exceeded due bounds.

Owen and his colleagues proposed that such teaching should be permitted only in places that were publicly known, and after notification had been given to the magistrates ; and they suggested also that none should be suffered to speak against the common principles of the Christian religion, without which there is no salvation. Upon being asked to define these principles, they produced a list of fifteen Fundamentals, which included the authority of the Scriptures, the doctrine of the Trinity, original sin, and justification by faith.

These proposals appeared in several pamphlets ; and in one of them with a significant addition.¹ It was there recommended, as a means of preventing persons of corrupt judgment from publishing dangerous errors, that no one should be permitted to speak in public on any religious question without a certificate from two or more godly and orthodox ministers, attesting his sufficiency to speak and soundness in the faith. The adoption of such a device would have placed an unrestricted censorship in the hands of the clergy, who

¹ The Humble Proposals of Mr. Owen, Mr. Tho. Goodwin, Mr. Nye, Mr. Sympson, and other ministers, who presented the Petition to the Parliament, and other Persons, Febr. 11, under debate by a Committee this 31 of March, 1652, for the futherance and Propagation of the Gospel in this Nation. *Thomason Tracts.*

were constituted sole judges of orthodoxy, and provided with the means of silencing all who differed from them. We may believe that it was this part of the scheme which specially evoked Milton's protest; and he was right in believing that it threatened danger to freedom of conscience.

He addressed his protest to Cromwell, who was known to favour the widest extension of religious freedom. At the Committee for the Propagation of the Gospel, when the proposals of the ministers were under discussion, Cromwell had already signified his opposition to intolerance, and had declared "that he had rather that Mahometanism were permitted among us than that one of God's children should be persecuted." Milton's own hostility to every form of restraint upon freedom of thought enlisted him upon the same side.

The Sonnet is, therefore, a poem written for a special occasion and object; and it is probable that it was sent by the poet to Cromwell, to make its direct appeal. Cromwell's victories are celebrated, Dunbar, Worcester, and Preston—where the Scots were defeated on the banks of the Darwen; but Milton was uttering an opinion which he has expressed elsewhere when he invited Cromwell to greater triumphs than those of war. In *Paradise Regained* he afterwards wrote:

They err who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to overrun
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault. . . .
But, if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attained,
Without ambition, war, or violence—
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance.

On the occasion when the Sonnet was written, Cromwell and Milton met on common ground as supporters of religious toleration, and Cromwell's greatness is nobly

commemorated; but we cannot say that it contains Milton's final estimate of the Protector's character. The relationship between them was not so close, nor Milton's adherence so unreserved, as is sometimes imagined. His official duties as Secretary for Foreign Tongues did not constitute him a member of the Government, and gave him no influence in its councils; he was a secretary and no more, his chief duty being to translate State papers into elegant Latin. He held the office under the Long Parliament, and continued to hold it under the Protectorate, but regarded himself as acting in the service of his country, not in that of any individual, however powerful.

The eloquent apostrophe to Cromwell in the *Second Defence of the English People* is another document by which we may estimate Milton's attitude to the Protector; written later than the Sonnet, after the lapse of two eventful years. Dr. Johnson perceived in it nothing more than flattery addressed to a tyrant; but the unprejudiced reader will find there less flattery than admonition. Cromwell is exhorted to revere the expectations of his country, the wounds of his fellow-soldiers, his own honour, and not now, after having endured so many sufferings for the sake of liberty, to violate it by his own action. His conduct would now show whether he really possessed the qualities of piety, fidelity, justice and self-denial, which were believed to be his.

These outspoken remonstrances were addressed to him when it was proposed that he should accept the title and state of king. Cromwell abstained from assuming the name, but adopted more of kingly power than Milton, the Republican, could have willingly assented to.

Among those who were then estranged from Cromwell was Colonel Robert Overton, who informed the Lord General that he could no longer serve him if he perceived that he *did only design the setting up of himself*. Overton

was one of Milton's friends, united to him in community of thought and sympathy since they had been fellow undergraduates at Cambridge.¹ His disaffection to Cromwell ended in a projected revolt, sudden arrest, and imprisonment in the Tower. Milton was keenly interested in his fortunes, and imparted his own interest to others: "I have an affectionate curiosity to know what becomes of Colonel Overton's business," wrote Marvell in a letter to the poet, when the first signs of Overton's discontent were becoming manifest. He knew Milton's feelings, and would not thus have written if his friend's sympathy had been clearly on the Protector's side.

It would be impossible to claim for Milton that he showed perfect foresight and consistency in his opinions concerning the events of his time: such foresight would have been more than human, and such consistency hardly possible in a period of abrupt and startling change, when parties suddenly divided against themselves. On April 20, 1653, Cromwell expelled the Long Parliament, for reasons which are imperfectly known, and which, so far as they are known at all, can be interpreted in very different senses. In 1654 Milton mentioned this event in his *Second Defence of the English People*. The allusion is brief, but approval is not withheld. The members of the Parliament, it is said, had been more intent on their own selfish interest than the public good, and had been the dupes of a few overbearing men; Cromwell had put an end to their domination. There follows the long and vehement adjuration to Cromwell to revere the right of his country, and not to cast into despair those who still hoped to see liberty established by his means.

Several years of the Cromwellian Protectorate ensued,

¹ Robert Overton matriculated at St. John's, 1627. Cf. Venn's *Book of Matriculations and Degrees*, Cambridge, 1913, p. 502.

1. 14. Of hireling wolves whose Gospel is their maw.

Milton's use of Biblical language is evident here as elsewhere. Cf. "The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep," *John*, x. 13; "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," *Matthew*, vii. 15; "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock," *Acts*, xx. 29; "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly," *Philippians*, iii. 18, 19.

17.

To Sir Henry Vane the younger.

Vane, young in years, but in sage counsel old,
 Than whom a better senator ne'er held
 The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repelled
 The fierce Epirote and the African bold,
 Whether to settle peace or to unfold
 The drift of hollow States, hard to be spelled,
 Then to advise how War may best upheld
 Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
 In all her equipage; besides to know
 Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
 What severs each thou hast learnt, which few have
 done.
 The bounds of either sword to thee we owe.
 Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans
 In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

From the abolition of the monarchy in 1649 until Cromwell's *coup d'état* in 1653 England was governed

by the remnant of the Long Parliament and a Council of State appointed by that body and renewed every month. To Milton, whose Republicanism was founded on classical precedents, the comparison of such rule to that of the Roman Senate, with its associations of power and dignity, was easily suggested; and the vigour and firmness of the Republic's foreign policy did something to confirm the resemblance.

Sir Henry Vane was one of the most able, acute and energetic members of the Parliament and its Council. He devoted his labours to foreign affairs, and to the administration of the Navy, then brought by his vigilance to a flourishing and formidable condition, and soon to be made illustrious by the victories of Blake. A crisis, to which Milton alludes, existed in the relations between England and Holland, and at the moment when the sonnet was written war had already been declared.

There were several causes of quarrel. The English maintained their ancient claim that all foreign vessels should salute English ships of war in the Channel, seized Dutch vessels which were carrying French goods, and levied toll on Dutch fishermen in the North Sea. The Dutch believed that they were treating, under a silent reservation, with a usurping government, and probably imagined that the situation might be suddenly altered by the fall of the faction in office. The suspicion that they entertained such notions would increase the distrust of the English council.

On the 19th of May, 1652, the fleets of Blake and Tromp met in the Downs, provocation was given or alleged, broadsides were exchanged, and the Dutch were finally beaten off.

War had practically begun, but nevertheless the Dutch Ambassadors lingered on in London, protesting that the fight had taken place against the will of the States-General and without their knowledge, and pro-

posing that friendly negotiations should continue. Their drift, in Milton's words, was *hard to be spelled*; and it was suspected that their presence in England was not with the intention of averting war, but rather to spy out the land. Hobbes, an acute and well-informed observer, writes that they designed "to inform themselves what naval forces the English had ready, and how the people here were contented with the government." ¹

On the 4th of June the Council of State appointed a Committee to prepare an answer to the Dutch Ambassadors, Sir Henry Vane being the first member named in the list. As he was also President of the Council itself during the same month, the negotiations were mainly in his hands.²

The answer declared that the protestations of the Dutch Government and the actions of their officers at sea were inconsistent with each other; that the Dutch had prepared a fleet of 150 ships without any visible cause; and that there was too much reason to believe that they intended to destroy the English fleet by surprise and expose the Commonwealth to invasion. England was still willing to continue the negotiations, but they must now be less dilatory and more effectual.³ But further proceedings were in vain, and on the 30th of June the envoys received their passports and departed.

This was the series of events which had just taken place when Milton composed the sonnet, and which is mentioned in the first eight lines. He sent a copy of it to Sir Henry Vane on the 3rd of July, 1652, three days after the Dutch Ambassadors were dismissed.⁴

¹ *Behemoth*, Works, ed. 1840, vol. vi. p. 381.

² Bisset's *Commonwealth of England*, 1867, vol. ii. p. 329.

³ Whitelocke's *Memorials*, 1853, vol. iii. p. 428.

⁴ *Life of Vane*, 1662, p. 93.

Another subject then emerges, of domestic interest, in which Vane's statesmanship was also concerned—the burning question of religious Toleration.

The Presbyterians, who had at first been powerful in the Long Parliament, believed in the establishment of their own doctrines and the suppression of other beliefs by the civil power. The Independents, amongst whom were Vane and Milton, were moving in the direction of liberty. To place the problem in a clear light, and establish policy on a firm foundation, they emphasised the distinction between civil and ecclesiastical authority, reducing the latter to the control of each congregation over its own members, as it existed in the primitive Church. The guiding rule was to be found in those Epistles where St. Paul instructs and admonishes the Christian converts; and the modern congregations, like those of the apostolic age, should govern themselves alone, asking no authority over others, and leaving the civil law to the civil magistrate, to be exercised in purely secular affairs.

Milton had firmly grasped this principle, and states it in his own words in the *Defence of the English People*. In answer to Salmasius, who had reproached the English Commonwealth with allowing the dregs of all sects, he exclaims: "Why should they not? It belongs to the church to exclude them from the communion of the faithful, not to the magistrates to expel them from the state, if they do not offend against civil laws. Men at first united in civil society that they might live in safety and freedom, without suffering violence and wrong, in the Church that they might live in religion and holiness. The one has its laws, and the other its discipline, which is utterly different. In the whole Christian world, for so many years, one war has followed another because the Magistrate and the Church have confused their functions."

That these were also the opinions of Vane we have

on good authority. He was a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, where the subject of religious Toleration was keenly discussed between Independents and Presbyterians; and argued earnestly in favour of freedom of conscience. Robert Baillie, one of the Scottish members, whose letters are an interesting and valuable record, writes that,—“The great shot of Cromwell and Vane is to have a liberty for all religions without any exceptions;” and regards Vane as the most powerful defender of his party in the Assembly's debates.

Milton himself frequented the meetings, and listened to these debates with peculiar interest. They left a deep impression on his mind. Many years afterwards he recalled them. Addressing the members of the Long Parliament in his treatise of *Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*, he mentioned eminent persons of their number,—“Some of whom I remember to have heard often for several years, at a council next in authority to your own, so well joining religion with civil prudence, and yet so well distinguishing the different power of either; and this not only voting, but frequently reasoning why it should be so, that if any there present had been before of an opinion contrary, he might doubtless have departed thence a convert in that point, and have confessed that then both commonwealth and religion will at length, if ever, flourish in Christendom, when either they who govern discern between civil and religious, or they only who so discern shall be admitted to govern.”

l. 1. young in years.—Vane's age was nearly forty when the Sonnet was written; but he was commonly called Young Sir Henry Vane, to distinguish him from his father, Old Sir Henry, who was still alive.

l. 3. when gowns, not arms, repelled
The fierce Epirote and the African bold,—

The firmness and policy of the Roman Senate, no less than the valour of its soldiers, defeated Pyrrhus, King of

Epirus, and Hannibal. Cicero argues in a well-known passage in favour of civic virtues, as against those which are purely military,—*Parvi enim sunt foris arma, nisi est consilium domi*; and cites the dictum, *Cedant arma togae*.¹

l. 6. The drift of hollow States, hard to be spelled.

Milton falls into a semi-pun, the *hollow* States being the States-General of *Holland*. The first biographer of Vane, is echoing Milton's words when he writes:—"Yet that he could conjecture and spell out the most reserved consults and secret drifts of foreign councils against us (which they reckoned as *tacita*, concealed till executed), the Hollander did experience to their cost."—*Life of Vane*, 1662, p. 96.

l. 12. The bounds of either sword to thee we owe.

The *civil sword* and the *spiritual sword* are common expressions in the books of the time, the sword being thought of under both designations as the symbol of authority, not as that of destruction and violence. The same symbolism still attaches to it when it is borne before the king at the Coronation, or before the Lord Mayor of London, who presents it to the Sovereign at the entrance to the City.²

The significance of spiritual authority was differently apprehended by different writers; but it was possible to speak of the *spiritual sword* in a purely emblematic fashion, without suggesting constraint or compulsion by any kind of force. Roger Williams, an earnest advocate of Toleration, laments that "men fling away the spiritual sword and spiritual artillery, in spiritual and religious causes, and rather trust, for the suppressing of each other's gods, conscience, and religion, as they suppose, to an arm of flesh and sword of steel."—*The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution Discuss'd*, ch. ii.

¹ *De Officiis*, bk. i. xxii. 76.

² In 1633 a dispute took place with reference to the right of the Lord Mayor to have the sword borne up before him within St. Paul's Cathedral, and especially within the choir. Gomme's *Governance of London*, p. 153.

l. 10. her eldest son,—the *firstborn* of Religion, another trace of Biblical language. Cf. "Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power."—*Genesis* xlix. 3.

18.

On the late Massacre in Piemont.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not : in thy book record their groans,
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all th' Italian fields where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant ; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who having learned thy way
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

During the time when Milton held the office of Secretary to the Committee for Foreign Affairs, the event which left the most lasting memory was the massacre of the Vaudois, and Cromwell's intervention on their behalf. Its significance for Milton's mind appears from this sonnet, the most elevated and passionate of all, as it is the finest as a composition in verse.

The Vaudois were looked on by the Protestant churches as the first and most primitive, those who had kept the light burning in times of darkness. Their origin, and that of their name, was long involved in obscurity,

which modern scholarship has done something to make clear. It is now accepted that they began as a movement within the Church, which only gradually separated from it. Their founder was Pierre Valdes, a merchant of Lyons, who sought for the perfect Christian life in one of poverty and self-abnegation. Obeying the precept, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor," he bestowed his goods in charity, and became the preacher of a simple Christian faith, which spread in his native district and gained many disciples. They were called from his name, in Latin documents, *Valdesii* or *Valdenses*.

At first they had no thought of separating themselves from the Church, and in 1179 sent envoys to the Lateran Council to ask permission to continue their teaching. Under other circumstances, Valdes might have become the founder of a new order, not of a new sect. But they were discountenanced by the regular clergy, and were treated as schismatics, afterwards with severity as dangerous heretics. In 1215 they were formally excommunicated. None the less the Valdenses continued to teach and convert, until their adherents were numerous in Provence and Dauphiné, and were known also in Lombardy, Germany, and Bohemia.

Then the movement began to decline. A steady and persistent persecution by the ecclesiastical power thinned their ranks, until they almost disappeared from the cities and populous districts, in which they had first arisen, and had now their chief strength among the peasantry in certain valleys of the Alps, where they were protected by seclusion and by the absence of any powerful authority in church or state. Groups of mountain villages on the borders of France and Italy were thus peopled almost wholly by Valdenses, or *Vaudois*, as they were called in French, their most familiar language. After the Reformation they entered into

relations with the Protestants of the Swiss cantons ; and, under the influence of Geneva, they were organised at last as a Protestant church.¹

The protection of the Protestant states has contributed, with their own tenacity and fidelity to the faith of their ancestors, to preserve the Vaudois to the present day. Their ancient home, which they still inhabit, lies to the south-west of Turin, on the banks of certain streams which are tributary to the Po, and charms every stranger by its exquisite beauty.

In front is the plain of Piedmont, with the great river flowing through its vast expanse. Around are the Alps, lesser than those of Switzerland, and free from snow in the middle of summer, but rising to a height of 8000 or 9000 feet, and green with many forests. Two little rivers, the Pellice and the Angrogna, flow through the chief valleys. The former is the main stream, and beside it are large villages, Torre Pellice, Villar, and Bobbio ; but the Angrogna valley is even more attractive in beauty and historic interest. It would be hard to find anywhere in the Alps or Apennines a more delightful spot. It is deep and narrow, its winding slopes irradiated by a southern sun. With soft meadows, closely mown, rills of clear water, and graceful chestnut trees, it has an air of pastoral calm and serenity ; but in war the steepness of the ridges and the cliffs which at one point enclose the stream could make it an almost impregnable fortress. To the south, beyond the lesser ridges, the great rocky summit of Monte Viso, veined with ice, rises into the sky.

¹ Authorities for the history of the Vaudois : Jean Léger, *Histoire des Églises Évangéliques des Vallées du Piémont*, 1669 ; Claretta, *Storia del Regno di Carlo Emanuele II.*, Duca di Savoia, 1877 ; Comba, *Storia della Riforma in Italia*, 1881, *Storia dei Valdesi*, 1893 ; Gay, *Histoire des Vaudois*, 1912 ; Gilly, *Excursion to the Mountains of Piémont*, 1825 ; Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, 1901, ch. xlvii. ; Mandell Creighton, article "Waldenses," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

The Dukes of Savoy were not sparing in efforts to suppress the Vaudois, or drive them from their native seat; and the latter, in the wars which broke out, acquired much of the military character. After a severe struggle in 1561, a peace was concluded by which the Duke granted toleration to those of the community who resided within certain territorial limits. The region thus prescribed for their habitation included the Angrogna and the upper part of the Pellice valley; but it excluded Torre Pellice, which lies lower, and San Giovanni, lower still, with other villages where the valley expands into the Piedmontese plain.

Nevertheless, nearly a century later, when the court of Turin began the proceedings which led to the massacre, there were Vaudois dwelling and practising their religion at Torre Pellice, San Giovanni, and elsewhere outside the boundary laid down in 1561. In January, 1655, an edict was issued commanding the Vaudois of the lower villages to abandon their houses and withdraw within the limits before three days were over, on pain of death. Petitions, appeals, and ineffective negotiations followed. In April an army commanded by the Marquis of Pianezza was sent to enforce obedience. Pianezza arrived at San Giovanni, and found it empty and abandoned. He proceeded to Torre Pellice, where resistance was made and shots were fired; but the village was soon taken, and the Vaudois inhabitants fled to the hills.

Pianezza had accomplished the ostensible purpose of his mission. Torre Pellice and the district on the edge of the plain had been cleared of the Vaudois: outside the tolerated limits there now were none. The treaty of 1561 had been vindicated; but that treaty itself promised security to the inhabitants of Angrogna and the upper valley of the Pellice river. Little would have been heard of the matter by the outer world, had it ended there; but it was designed to make a new.

beginning, and to eradicate the Vaudois completely from the territory of Savoy.¹

Pianezza demanded quarters for his troops from the peasantry; they were distributed throughout the valleys; and on the 24th of April they suddenly fell upon the villages, and laid them waste with fire and sword. The inhabitants, taken by surprise, made no resistance, but fled in panic, with the soldiers in pursuit. Beyond the Alps was the French frontier, which promised safety; but it was a cold and bitter season and the mountains were still covered deep with snow. The pass of St. Julian, by which many sought to escape with their families, crosses a ridge more than 7000 feet high, in a wild and desolate region, where the fugitives perished among snow-wreaths and avalanches. But they were more fortunate than those of their brethren seized by Pianezza's troops, who were slaughtered, men, women, and children alike, with dreadful refinements of cruelty. Among the beautiful chestnut groves of Angrogna the crags are still shown from which some of them were hurled. Such prisoners as were brought to headquarters were hanged at the bridge of Torre Pellice, Pianezza declaring that the Duke had resolved to suffer none of their religion in his dominions.

By the Vaudois themselves the number of those who lost their lives has been estimated at 1712. The Court of Savoy, in an official and apologetic narrative, speaks of 200. In the same document it states that women who had fallen into the hands of the soldiers were taken from them, a ransom being paid;² but it is difficult

¹ The letters of Pier Antonio Caresana, chaplain to the Duchess of Savoy, show what was passing at Turin. He attributes to Pianezza "*una sempre fermissima sicurezza della prestazione divina per questa impresa*"; and writes elsewhere, "*si spera che abbiasi affatto a sradicare da tutte queste parti l'eretica pravità, nè più vi si debba permetterne l'esercizio.*" Claretta, vol. i. p. 107.

² Gilly, Appendix, p. xx.

to share the satisfaction of a government which takes pride in having rescued some of its own subjects from its own army.

The fugitives who reached the soil of France were safe, for there were already many of their community dwelling there in peace, and the Edict of Nantes was still unrevoked. The leaders made their way to Paris, published what had been done, and invoked the protection of the Protestant states.

Cromwell took up their cause with great energy. A dispatch in which the tone and authority are his, and the language that of Milton, was sent to the Duke of Savoy, who was earnestly entreated to show mercy and to restore the liberties of his Protestant subjects. Letters, also composed by Milton, were sent to the kings of Sweden and Denmark, the Dutch Republic, and the Protestant Cantons of Switzerland, by which they were urged to join with the English Commonwealth in making representations; and appeals were likewise made to the king of France and Cardinal Mazarin. A special ambassador, Sir Samuel Morland, was sent to Savoy, who addressed the court in outspoken terms and demanded redress.

But Cromwell did not propose to confine himself to diplomacy. He was prepared also, if need should be found, to go to war. Speedy and decisive means were to be taken, he wrote to the Protestant states, that the innocent might not be left to perish. The territories of Savoy bordered on the Mediterranean, and had two important seaboard towns, Nice and Villafranca. It was Cromwell's intention, if other means should fail, that Nice and Villafranca should be seized by an English army.¹

Meanwhile the Vaudois were taking up arms for themselves. They were a courageous and warlike people, had already fought for their cause, and were

¹ Gardiner, p. 421.

to do so again more than thirty years after, in danger no less great. Their complete disaster and headlong flight on the fatal 24th of April can be explained only by one cause: they were unsuspecting and taken at unawares. But on French territory they rallied, and prepared to return to their homes, where parties of Vaudois were still holding out among the mountains.

In the war that followed the peasant leader, Janavel, was distinguished by valour, resourcefulness, and success, which have made him ever since the hero of his people. No such aptitude for war was shown on the other side, and the prestige of victory soon passed to the Vaudois. The Angrogna valley, a fortress made by nature, was occupied and firmly held; they repulsed several attacks upon it, and began in turn to take the offensive.

From their heights they saw beneath them the village of San Secondo, where a fort was held by a regiment of Piedmontese troops, part of the force which had perpetrated the Easter massacre. Descending suddenly upon the place, they made a desperate assault, took it by storm, and destroyed the garrison. Fresh troops were brought up for a concerted effort to drive the Vaudois from their position; and on the 12th of July the decisive battle was fought. The scene was La Vachère, a high and narrow mountain-ridge, which closes the Angrogna to the north. For some time the issue was in doubt; but a detachment of Vaudois on a rocky summit rolled down stones on the Piedmontese, who were thrown into confusion; the others charged and gained a complete victory, driving the enemy in rout to the plain.

On the 18th of August peace between the Duke of Savoy and the Vaudois was signed at Pignerol, and their ancient rights were restored. The French government had interposed, and its ambassador acted as mediator, along with delegates from the Swiss cantons.

Cromwell's insistence had also produced its effect. But it may still remain a question how far the pacification was due to foreign aid, and how far to San Secondo and La Vachère. The peace was very imperfectly observed, and the court of Savoy did not cease to harass its Protestant subjects. A final and no less desperate war came in 1689; but it left the Vaudois still unsubdued.

l. 1. Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints.

Cf. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." *Revelation*, vi. 9-10.

l. 7. the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks.

Jean Léger, the leader and historian of the Vaudois, states that the wife of Paul Parisa, of the church of San Giovanni, was precipitated from a rock with her infant son in her arms, and three days afterwards was found dead, with the child still alive, and so tightly clasped that it could hardly be removed from her embrace. The son was still living in 1669, when Léger's book was published. Morland mentions the same incident.

l. 14. the Babylonian woe.—Petrarch has several sonnets of invective against the papal court, which he identifies, as many have done, with the Babylon of the Apocalypse. Babylon, he exclaims, has filled up the measure of the wrath of God:

Fontana di dolore, albergo d' ira,
Scola d' errori, e tempio d' eresia,
Già Roma, or Babilonia falsa e ria,
Per cui tanto si piagne e si sospira ;—

That Milton was familiar with this sonnet is shown by the quotation from it in his prose treatise *Of Reformation in England*, where he remarks that in some editions of Petrarch it had been suppressed. The word *woe* has caused some perplexity; but Petrarch wrote, *Fontana di dolore*.

19.

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide ;
' Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ? '
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, ' God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest :
They also serve who only stand and wait.'

Milton's blindness, which is mentioned for the first time in his poetry in this sonnet, had come upon him by slow and painful steps. His eyes, as he himself states, were naturally weak, and he was subject from youth to frequent headaches. Incessant study further impaired them, and his sight began gradually to fail. The left eye was first affected, and had become completely blind by the beginning of 1650.

In January of that year he was requested by the Council of State to write something in answer to the attack of Salmasius on the English Republicans, and began the composition of his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*. He was warned by his physicians that he ran the risk of losing the sight of his remaining eye, if he persevered with such an arduous piece of labour ; but rejected their counsel, believing that he had to choose between the loss of sight and the neglect of duty.

The result which they had predicted ensued. The right eye also gradually perished, and in 1652 Milton was totally blind. His misfortune was then so well known, to enemies as well as to friends, that it was made a matter of reproach against him in the *Regii Sanguinis Clamor*, published in that year. His age was then forty-three. But, as he states in a letter to Leonard Philaras, a faint susceptibility to light still remained with him some years later. In the same letter he describes the symptoms of the malady, but not so clearly as to make it possible to determine the cause.

The poet's blindness is spoken of in a later sonnet, and in several passages in *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*, and, as is natural, with changes of tone and feeling. The present poem, composed when the calamity was fresh, and before he had become accustomed to a life in darkness, opens with a mood of discouragement and grief, and closes with quiet resignation. For the time Milton seems to have believed that his blindness must end his life as a poet, and that the great work which he had long meditated would never be written.

1. 3. And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless.

In the letter to an unknown friend which in the Cambridge MS. accompanies the Sonnet on his twenty-third birthday, Milton describes his own sense of responsibility for the use of his genius, quoting the command of Christ that all should labour while it is light, and the parable concerning *the terrible seizing of him that hid the talent*. He now asks if God will still judge him as strictly, when the means by which the talent might be used has been taken from him.

1. 12. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest.

The angels are the messengers of God, described in

Paradise Lost, in words which closely resemble this passage, as those who

Stand ready at command, and are his eyes
That run through all the Heavens, or down to th' earth
Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,
O'er sea and land. Book III. l. 650-3.

Their character as divine messengers is the source of the name itself, and is supported by many passages of Scripture, especially by the coming of Gabriel to announce the birth of St. John the Baptist to Zacharias and of Jesus Christ to Mary. The manifold activity of the heavenly host is thus described by Dr. Robert Gell, in a work published in 1650,—

“The Angels of God, being by nature so noble, so active, could not be employed only in contemplation. They must have somewhat to do, as man had in his integrity; and their business is about the world and all the creatures in it. For the nations also need their government, yea, every person, to inflame them with the love of God. Therefore the Seraphim are first, then the Cherubim, for illumination and admonition, for purging and cleansing, for encouraging and strengthening in obedience, wherein they excel, for defence from evil angels and men. The Old Testament is full of their administration, yea, and the New Testament also.”¹

It is worthy of remark that Gell thus includes the Seraphim and Cherubim amongst the angels who visit mankind, bringing inspiration and comfort; although the classification of Thomas Aquinas places them in the highest order of the heavenly hierarchy, as spirits who have the perfect vision of God, and never leave his immediate presence. Protestant divinity did not closely follow the Scholastics, in this as in other matters, but sought to found its conception of the angelic nature only upon the Bible.

14. They also serve who only stand and wait.

The comparison is between angels who serve God in heaven, and bear his errands throughout the world, and

¹ *A Sermon touching God's Government of the World by Angels*, by Robert Gell, D.D., London, 1650, p. 19.

devout men upon earth who approve themselves in the sight of God only by the humble and submissive acceptance of his decrees, and by waiting with quiet endurance for the fulfilment of his purposes. In many passages of the Old and New Testament the word *wait* has the significance here given to it by Milton. "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord," *Psalms* xxvii. 14. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him," *Psalms* xxxvii. 7. "Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us," *Psalms* cxxiii. 2. "O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee," *Isaiah*, xxxiii. 2. "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," *2 Thessalonians*, iii. 5.

20.

Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son,
 Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
 Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
 Help waste a sullen day; what may be won
 From the hard season gaining? Time will run
 On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire
 The frozen earth, and clothe in new attire
 The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.
 What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
 Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
 To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice
 Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
 He who of those delights can judge, and spare
 To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

We are informed by Phillips that amongst the intimate friends who visited Milton at his house was "young Lawrence, the son of him that was President of Oliver's

Council, to whom there is a sonnet among the rest in his printed poems."

Henry Lawrence, the *virtuous father* of the sonnet, was the eldest son of Sir John Lawrence of St. Ives, in the county of Huntingdon. He studied at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, which was noted for its Puritan tendencies, and was a man of learning. Lawrence took no part in the Civil War. Before the outbreak he had gone abroad with his family, and for some years he remained in Germany and Holland, occupied with the education of his children and with the composition of several works on speculative theology. On his return he joined the Parliamentary party, but disapproved of the proceedings against Charles I. He was acquainted with Cromwell, who had lived in his earlier years at St. Ives; and the rise of Lawrence to political prominence coincides with that of Cromwell himself. He became Lord President of the Council, and was conspicuous among Commonwealth statesmen. Milton mentions him amongst others as a man adorned *summo ingenio optimisque artibus*. But after the death of Cromwell and the fall of his son, Richard, Henry Lawrence disappeared from view, and took no further part in public affairs.

Edward Lawrence, his eldest son, was born in 1633, and was with his father during his residence in foreign parts. The British Museum possesses a Latin letter in his handwriting, dated from Altena in Westphalia, 21 Jan., 1646. Young Edward acts as his father's amanuensis, the letter being addressed to Sir Simonds D'Ewes; but he sends his own commendations, and begs his father's friend to accept a composition in French, which he has himself inscribed to a learned Princess, probably Christina of Sweden. The letter suggests that the boy of thirteen was precocious and thoughtful.

He is next heard of ten years later when, as a young man of twenty-three, he was elected to the House of

Commons, in one of Cromwell's Parliaments, November 1656.

About that time Sir William Davenant reappeared in London. The versatile knight, who had known Shakespeare in his childhood, had acquired celebrity by his own poems, especially the Masques which he composed for the court of Whitehall. He followed the Queen into exile, was afterwards captured at sea by the Parliamentarians, narrowly escaped with his life, and spent some years in prison. Milton is known to have interceded for him, and to have had some share in procuring his release.¹ Davenant made his peace with the reigning powers, and was regarded with toleration, even when he set about reviving the drama by the performance of his operatic works. He became a favoured visitor at the house of Henry Lawrence; and when the Lord President's daughter, Martha, was married to the Earl of Barrymore, he celebrated the event in a long *Epithalamium*, in which he speaks of the bride's family with special honour.

But how, sweet bride, can envy e'er suppose
A rose-tree budding should not bear a rose ?
Or that thy virtuous mother bore not thee,
Or that thy noble father could
To any others trust his blood
But such as thy excelling brothers be ?

His works also contain a poem addressed *To Mr. Edward Laurence*, which was probably composed when the latter was elected to Parliament.

As some with care the morning's looks survey,
To guess their comforts from ensuing day,
So have I watched thy early youth, to know
How much the world may to thy manhood owe ;
And find thy life is in her entrance clear,
As was the sun's new face in his first sphere.

¹ "The Earliest Life of Milton," *English Historical Review*, 1902, p. 108.

In a somewhat fantastic vein Davenant speaks of clouds and mists drawn up by the warmth of the sun itself, by which its course is overcast : so virtuous men are obscured by envy and the censures of the multitude ; for vulgar minds cannot endure a brave excess. As a man of older years, he counsels restraint and reserve ; and concludes by predicting for Lawrence an illustrious future.

Counsel and prophecy were fated to be in vain. In the following year Edward Lawrence died, at the age of twenty-four, and was buried in the church of St. Margaret's, in Hertfordshire, where his tomb may still be seen, a slab in the chancel pavement.

On his death his brother, Henry, became the Lord President's heir. Little is known of the younger Henry Lawrence, but enough to suggest that his tastes were not intellectual. He is heard of in 1658, when he went with Lord Barrymore, "and a great number of other English gallants," to witness the siege of Dunkirk ;¹ and on the eve of the Restoration the writer of a Royalist pamphlet makes fun of his addiction to great saddles and lofty steeds. He succeeded to the family possessions at his father's death, but led a life of complete retirement.

There is no positive statement by any contemporary that Edward Lawrence was the friend of Milton ; and the poet's biographers have hitherto given the preference to Henry. The poem by Davenant, here quoted for the first time, combines with other circumstances to throw the weight of evidence on the side of Edward. But other documents remain which raise probability to demonstration.

Amongst Milton's friends there was then a certain Henry Oldenburg, a German of scientific and philosophic bent, who had settled in England, and who is also known to us as a correspondent of Spinoza. He became the

¹ Hartlib to Boyle, Boyle's Works, vol. v. p. 279.

first secretary of the Royal Society, and many of his papers are still extant among its archives at Burlington House. These include the drafts of four letters to Edward Lawrence, which are printed in the Appendix to this book—one in Italian, one in Latin, and two in French.

Writing from Oxford, Oldenburg speaks of the state of opinion then prevailing in the University, and declares that not a few had found courage to abandon the beaten track of Aristotelian and Scholastic philosophy, and to seek for more solid learning. He is himself drawn to Lawrence by a singular regard and affection, and believes that one so well born and educated, and so studious of knowledge and virtue, will come with the increase of experience and judgment to a noble maturity,—expressions which harmonise in an illuminating manner with those of Sir William Davenant. A more familiar touch is given by another passage, from which it appears that Lawrence had become somewhat impatient of his correspondent's requests for information concerning *what the Swede intends and what the French*, and had recommended the penny papers.

We have but to compare these letters with one from Milton himself to Oldenburg, included among his *Familiar Epistles*, and dated 1 August, 1657, in which he makes mention of their common friend Lawrence, to whom he has given the salutation of Oldenburg, as he had been desired to do—*Laurentio nostro, ut jussisti, salutem nomine tuo dixi*. That the common friend was Edward Lawrence is thus clearly established.

His youth, brilliant and attractive personality, and lively and outspoken conversation, made him a welcome companion by Milton's fireside in the dreary winter weather, when rain continued to descend and walks abroad were impossible. But this new friendship was not destined to a long continuance; and the early death

of Lawrence followed with tragic suddenness on the writing of the sonnet which has preserved his memory.

l. 1. of virtuous father virtuous son.—Virtuous is used in a Latin sense, and denotes the possession of mental power and capacity, eminence of character. Bacon writes,—"Those that are first raised to nobility are commonly more virtuous, but less innocent, than their descendants."—*Essays, Of Nobility*.

l. 8. The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.

Cf. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." *Matthew*, vi. 28.

l. 10. Attic taste.—The feasts of the Athenians were proverbial for their frugality and simple refinement,—*light and choice*. Plato in the *Republic* describes his imaginary citizens as living upon barley-cakes and wheaten loaves, with the addition of salt, olives, cheese, onions, figs and beans. He allows wine in moderation, and cheerful talk. The simplicity is ideal; but evidence also shows that the actual customs of Athens favoured wholesome and plain food, and distrusted innovations that tended to luxury. Passages on this subject are collected by Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistarum*, bk. iv.

l. 13. and spare to interpose them oft.—This passage has sometimes been taken as equivalent to "spare time to interpose them oft," *i.e.* indulge in them freely; but this is a forced construction, and contradicts the Horatian sentiment of moderation which we should look for in so Horatian a poem, as well as

The rule of *Not too much*, by temperance taught,
Paradise Lost, xi. 531.

Milton's use of *spare* with the infinitive, in the sense of *forbear*, is good literary English. Cf.

So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand
Prevented spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends.

Paradise Lost, II. 737-740.

And on she moves—with pace how light !
 Nor spares to stoop her head, and taste
 The dewy turf with flowers bestrown.

Wordsworth, *The White Doe of Rylstone*,
 Canto I., 137-139.

He spared to lift his hand against the King,
 Who made him knight.

Tennyson, *Guinevere*, 437-8.

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands.

Tennyson, *The Passing of Arthur*, 131-2.

21.

Cyriack, whose grandsire on the Royal Bench
 Of British Themis, with no mean applause,
 Pronounced, and in his volumes taught our laws,
 Which others at their bar so often wrench ;
 To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
 In mirth that after no repenting draws ;
 Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause,
 And what the Swede intends, and what the French.
 To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
 Toward solid good what leads the nearest way ;
 For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
 And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
 That with superfluous burden loads the day,
 And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

The grandfather of Cyriack Skinner was Sir Edward Coke, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and the first jurist of his age. Mention of Coke is apt to recall his savage treatment of Sir Walter Raleigh, whom he prosecuted when Attorney General, and his jealous

rivalry with Bacon. But he was a greater lawyer than Bacon, and as a Judge was upright and courageously independent. He was deprived of the Chief Justiceship by James I., and in his later years sat in the House of Commons, taking a prominent share in promoting the Petition of Right. His legal works, which Milton mentions, are his *Reports* and his *Institutes of the Law of England*.

Coke's daughter Bridget was the wife of a country gentleman, William Skinner of Thornton Curtis in Lincolnshire, who died at an early age. Cyriack, their youngest son, was baptised in the church of Barrow-on-Humber, 18 November, 1627, some months after his father's decease. Mrs. Skinner continued to reside at Thornton Curtis, and was on terms of friendship with the Rev. Andrew Marvell of Hull, father of the poet,—according to Thomas Fuller, who describes her as “a very religious Gentlewoman.”¹ But Fuller has followed an erroneous tradition in stating that she perished with Mr. Marvell in a boating accident on the Humber in 1641; the evidence to the contrary being that of her will at Somerset House, which was made in 1648, and was not proved till 1653. Although she had two elder sons, she left all her property, except some legacies, to Cyriack, who was evidently her favourite child.

When Milton began to take pupils in his house in Aldersgate Street, Mrs. Skinner placed her son under his care, and between teacher and pupil an affectionate intimacy sprang up, which lasted till the close of Milton's life.

Skinner followed the law, like his grandfather, and was admitted a member of Lincoln's Inn in 1647. He held Milton's political views, and took a lively interest in the discussion of government and constitutional theory. Although no poet himself, he had some acquaintance amongst men of letters, which included Harrington,

¹ *Worthies of England*, ed. 1811, vol. i. p. 165.

author of *Oceana*, and Andrew Marvell. In a letter written in 1654 the latter congratulates Milton on the fact that Mr. Skinner has taken a dwelling near his, and may now be more frequently in his society.

An interesting glimpse of Skinner is afforded by John Aubrey, in his account of Harrington's life. At the beginning of 1660, when all things in the state were in confusion, a club of political speculators, Republicans in theory, met every night in a coffee-house at Westminster to discuss imaginary constitutions, aided by the drink, then new, which makes politicians wise. They favoured government by a Senate, whose members should be elected by ballot, and should retire by rotation every year: nothing, says Aubrey, could be more fair and impartial. Harrington was the inspiring spirit of these gatherings; but Aubrey informs us that "Mr. Cyriack Skinner, an ingenious young gentleman, scholar to John Milton, was chairman." Aubrey also reports that: "The discourses in this kind were the most ingenious and smart that ever I heard, or expect to hear, and bandied with great eagerness: the arguments in the Parliament House were but flat to it." That such discussions were more entertaining than the proceedings of the Rump may well be believed.

In May, 1660, on the eve of the Restoration, when Milton was in a position of danger and withdrew into concealment, Skinner was one of the friends who came, loyally and helpfully, to his assistance. We know no more of him, except what may be learned from the sonnets themselves, and the mention of his name by Phillips. There is evidence enough to show a man of quick intelligence and amiable disposition. He survived Milton by many years, and died in 1700, at the age of seventy-two.

This sonnet, like that to Lawrence which precedes, and may have been written on the same occasion, suggests the Horatian ode as a literary model. In the

same quiet and collected tone Horace invites his friends to lay care aside and accept the moment of tranquil happiness. Skinner is to forget *what the Swede intends, and what the French*, as Quintius Hirpinus is to cease from inquiring what are the purposes of the warlike Cantabrian and the Scythians.

1. 8. The Swede, was a customary mode of designation, and is used by Samuel Pepys. In *Hamlet*, Horatio and Marcellus are "liegemen to the Dane," and Hamlet's father combated "the ambitious Norway."

Charles X. of Sweden, the nephew of Gustavus Adolphus, succeeded to the throne in 1654. His reign was a rapid succession of military exploits. He plunged into war with Poland, overran the country, and occupied Warsaw and Cracow; then abandoned his project of conquest, and took up a new struggle with Denmark, which had rashly declared war in June 1657. Charles conveyed his army into the Danish islands by crossing the ice of the frozen Belt, and compelled the Danes to make peace. A few months afterwards he repudiated the treaty, and resumed the war; laid siege to Copenhagen, which was only saved by the arrival of a fleet and army from Holland; and was still engaged in the struggle when he suddenly died, 13 February, 1660, at the age of thirty-eight.

The actions of such a monarch, like those of a certain prince mentioned by Addison, afforded great matter of speculation. So did the policy of Cardinal Mazarin, who directed the affairs of France.

22.

Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes, though clear
To outward view of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,

Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
 Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
 Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
 Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
 The conscience, Friend, to have lost them overplied
 In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
 Of which all Europe talks from side to side.
 This thought might lead me through the world's vain
 mask,
 Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

As the final failure of Milton's sight took place in the spring of 1652, the composition of the sonnet may be assigned to 1655, the preceding sonnet to Skinner being probably of about the same date. Milton withheld the present sonnet from publication in 1673, along with those to Fairfax, Cromwell and Vane. The reason for retaining them in manuscript continued until the Revolution, and they were not published until 1694, when Phillips placed them in his life of Milton, but with an almost inconceivably corrupt text. That to Cromwell was shortened to thirteen lines. Fortunately, the correct readings are to be found in the Cambridge MS., and the text has been restored. Phillips gives the heading, *To Mr. Cyriack Skinner upon his blindness*, which cannot be Milton's own.

l. 1. this three years' day.—A curious idiom signifying *for three years*. Cf.

Believe me, lords, for flying at the brook,
 I saw not better sport these seven years' day.
 Shakespeare, *Henry VI*. Part II. Act II. sc. 1.

l. 12. talks.—This is the reading of the Cambridge MS., dictated by Milton himself. The version printed by Phillips in 1694 has—

Of which all Europe *rings* from side to side,

—which may have been suggested to the transcriber or compositor by an unconscious transference from the first line of Sonnet 15,—

Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
published by Phillips on a preceding page.

Bishop Newton suggests that "*rings* may be thought better than *talks from side to side*," because,—“There is something very pleasing, as well as very noble, in this conscious virtue and magnanimity of a great poet.” But *talks* is the only reading which has Milton's own authority.

23.

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom, washed from spot of child-bed taint,
Purification in the old Law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veiled ; yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But Oh ! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

The last of Milton's sonnets was written after the death of his second wife, the best beloved, Katharine Woodcock, whom he married in 1656 at St. Mary, Aldermanbury. At that time, in spite of his blindness, he still held the post of Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth, and resided in Petty France, near St. James's

Park. The house in which his brief married life was spent has long since vanished, and its site is now lost beneath the gloomy mass of Queen Anne's Mansions. In October, 1657, Mrs. Milton gave birth to a child, and, after lingering for more than three months, died in February, 1658. The child survived her by only a few weeks, and both were buried at St. Margaret's, Westminster.

The poem itself affords the best knowledge of her nature that we shall ever possess. Her husband, who wrote nothing insincerely, has ascribed to her *love, sweetness, goodness*, and was deeply afflicted by her loss.

Her earlier history has hitherto been a blank, except for the statement of Phillips that her father was called Captain Woodcock, and that her family resided at Hackney. It is now possible to give some more extended information.

Katharine Woodcock was born in London in 1628, and was baptised in the church of St. Dunstan's in the East; her age was 28 at the time of her marriage, and nearly 30 at her death.

Her childhood was an unhappy one, if no certain home and an idle, extravagant and shiftless father could make it so. The father himself, William Woodcock, was the eldest son of Richard Woodcock, who ranked as a country gentleman, having a manor-house and land, called Bollingtons, at Clavering in Essex. It was much encumbered, and even its ownership was disputed in the Court of Chancery by a rival claimant, Roger Cotton. Richard Woodcock sank into embarrassment and distress. In 1637 he was 74 years of age, feeble and frail, and imprisoned in the King's Bench Prison for his own debts and those of his son, for which he had given security. The unfortunate old man lingered there for several years, and died, still a prisoner, in 1640.

William Woodcock, his son, had married Elizabeth Sudbury, daughter of a London merchant, and had four daughters, of whom Katharine was the eldest; but of William Woodcock there is little good to be learned. He had no occupation, and led a careless existence. The manor and lands at Clavering had hardly come into his possession when they were sold, and the proceeds swallowed by his creditors. Only a small portion of their value was afterwards recovered from the wreck. He could not be trusted with money, and had an easy habit of living with his family at free quarters in the houses of his wife's relations.

It was fortunate for Elizabeth Woodcock and her children that the members of her own family were well-to-do and well-disposed. After the death of her father, John Sudbury, she was treated with kindness by his second wife, whose house in Tower Street was open to her in times of need. It is probable that Katharine Woodcock was born there. Among the persons who surrounded her in her childhood Mrs. Sudbury makes the most pleasant impression. She was a woman of sense and character, and had a special affection for Katharine, to whom by her last will she left the sum of £40, "and also a little chest with all things to be found therein, the key of which chest I have already delivered to her."

William Woodcock did not long survive the unhappy father whose ruin he had helped to accomplish. After his death his widow settled at Hackney, where the rest of her life was spent and her daughters were brought up.

At Hackney also resided two wealthy kinsmen, who took a friendly interest in the fortunes of the Woodcock family, Sir William Humble and Sir Thomas Vyner. It was then a pleasant rural suburb, where prosperous London citizens had their country houses.

Sir William Humble, who was Mrs. Woodcock's cousin, had some share in the history of his time. He had Presbyterian connections, but was attached to the Royalist cause, and secretly supplied large sums of money to Charles II. during his exile. After the Restoration he was created a Baronet.

His brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Vyner, was a goldsmith and banker in Lombard Street, whose large financial operations made him a man of influence. In 1654 he was Lord Mayor, and entertained Oliver Cromwell in the city; and after the massacre and dispersal of the Vaudois in the following year he was one of the Treasurers of the fund which was raised in England, with Cromwell's encouragement, to relieve their necessities. Vyner consistently supported the Protectorate; but was none the less successful in making his peace at the Restoration, and received a Baronetcy in 1661. His country residence at Hackney was a picturesque Elizabethan mansion called the Black and White House, in which Mrs. Woodcock and her household had rooms, after it came into his possession. To all his poorer relatives, it is recorded, "he showed himself most loving and kind."¹

It is a reasonable probability that Milton had some degree of friendship with Sir Thomas Vyner, and in that way first made the acquaintance of his kinswoman. Vyner's relations with the Commonwealth government, and especially his interest in the Vaudois and his efforts to assist them, afforded at the time much common ground.

l. 1. my late espoused saint.—In one of the poems of Bembo, lamenting the death of his lady, he addresses her as *santa*. A friend having raised some doubt concerning the use of the word, he answered that,—“All the souls that are in Heaven are saints, and may be so called.”²

¹ *Vyner, A Family History*, 1885, p. 31.

² *Rime di Bembo*, Milan, 1808, p. 296.

l. 2. like *Alcestis*.—In the tragedy of Euripides, one of Milton's favourite poets, *Alcestis*, wife of *Admetus*, gives her life as a ransom for that of her husband, and, after she has been borne to the grave, *Hercules* wrestles with *Death* and forces him to give up his prey, bringing back *Alcestis* alive to her husband. In a line which Milton follows, *Hercules* is addressed as "noble son of mighty *Zeus*."

l. 6. Purification in the old Law.—The Mosaic legislation contains instructions for the purification of women after child-birth.—*Leviticus*, ch. xii.

l. 9. vested all in white.—Cf. "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?"

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—*Revelation*, vii. 13, 14.

l. 10. Her face was veiled.—The allusion to a veiled face has been traced to a passage in the *Alcestis*; but in the tragedy *Alcestis* is not recognised by her husband when her face is covered, and is treated by him as a stranger until the veil is removed. Milton recognises his wife in spite of the veil. It is clear that he alludes to his blindness during their married life.

The theme of this sonnet is not unknown in the wide literature of the Italian Sonnet, where laments for the death of a beloved wife sometimes occur. Even the incident of her appearance to the bereaved husband in a dream may be found in a poem by *Berardino Rota*, the resemblance of which to Milton's sonnet was first pointed out by *Hallam*.

In lieto e pien di riverenza aspetto,
 Con vesta di color bianco e vermiglio,
 Di doppia luce serenato il ciglio,
 Mi viene in sonno il mio dolce diletto.
 Io me l' inchino, e con cortese affetto
 Seco ragiono e seco mi consiglio,
 Com' abbia a governarmi in quest' esiglio;
 E piango intanto, e la risposta aspetto.

Caudato, or Sonnet with a *coda* or *tail*. After the usual fourteen lines the poem is continued by the *tail*, which is composed of a half-line and a couplet. There may be one tail, or two, or three, or as many as the poet cares to add in the development of his theme. In some examples the poem is so much expanded in this way that the sonnet itself becomes no more than the opening of a long composition.

Unlike the regular Sonnet, which is usually reserved for serious and elevated subjects, the *Sonetto Caudato* is used in verses of a humorous and satirical kind : hence its selection by Milton for his present purpose. Its brightest and most noted exponent was Francesco Berni, who did more than any other to make it classical. He uses it in his satire on the doctors who attended Clement VII. :—

Il Papa non fa altro che mangiare,
Il Papa non fa altro che dormire :
Quest' è quel che si dice e si può dire
A chi del Papa viene a dimandare.

The *Sonetto Caudato* is still in use. There are numerous examples of it, some very long and elaborate, among the works of Carducci.

In the lines before us Milton, the Independent, satirises the Presbyterian clergymen who attended the Westminster Assembly.

In 1643 the Long Parliament resolved to abolish the form of church government by Archbishops and Bishops, and to substitute another, " nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland, and other Reformed Churches abroad." This was Milton's *Classic Hierarchy*; a Presbytery being sometimes also known as a *Classis*, the term which was in actual use in Holland. An Assembly of Divines was constituted, which sat in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster Abbey, and to which Parliament remitted the task of preparing the

new constitution. Most of its members were English, but four Scottish commissioners were present, Henderson, Rutherford, Baillie and Gillespie, who took no small part in its deliberations.

A large majority was found to be in favour of a Presbyterian settlement; but unexpected opposition was made by a small group of Independents, influential from their own ability and character, and the support they met with outside. These clergymen, to whom Milton pointedly alludes, although he does not name them, were Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Jeremiah Burroughs, Sidrach Simpson, and William Bridge.

Their criticism of the Presbyterian plan, and the resistance they offered to it, were persistent, and are frequently mentioned by one of the Scottish commissioners, Robert Baillie, whose Letters give an interesting insight into their proceedings.

When it became apparent that the Presbyterians were resolved to carry their scheme, the Independents, unable to have their own method adopted by the state, began to stipulate for at least the unrestrained existence of Independent congregations outside the national church, and complete freedom of thought and action for those who preferred to join such congregations; and the controversy developed into one concerning the limits of Toleration. The Presbyterian majority refused to grant liberty of dissent, and desired that all persons without exception should conform to the new Establishment. The Independents argued for the rights of the individual conscience; and feared that the success of their opponents would drive them from their native land into exile,—“not knowing where else, with safety, health, and livelihood, to set our feet on earth.”

Both parties looked to other influences without to favour their cause. Baillie's Letters reveal how his hopes rose and fell with the success of the Scottish army

which was in the field on the Parliamentary side. If the English troops failed to gain a victory by themselves, and if the Scottish army were triumphant over the enemy and indispensable to its friends, then the Presbyterians might be able to dictate their own terms in the Assembly : so Baillie hints to his correspondents. The Independents looked at first to the Parliament *to succour their just fears*, and, failing the Parliament, they had hopes in the victorious arms of Cromwell, which at last decided the issue. Cromwell was both an Independent and a supporter of Toleration ; and his rise to supreme power ruined the policy of the Presbyterian party. The Assembly soon after ceased to meet without a formal dissolution.

The debates which went on in 1644, 1645, and 1646 were not confined to the Assembly itself, but extended to the press, a copious succession of pamphlets appearing. On the Independent side the most important was a joint manifesto, the *Apologetical Narration*, signed by the five clergymen already named, Goodwin, Nye, Burroughs, Simpson, and Bridge, who are described by Milton as—

Men whose life, learning, faith and pure intent
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul.

That his regard for the Independent leaders was not without warrant appears from the respect which they received from their Presbyterian opponents. Baillie writes in one place, after describing a debate with Goodwin and his friends : " Truly, if the cause were good, the men have plenty of learning, wit, eloquence, and, above all, boldness and stiffness to make it out ; " and afterwards he speaks of " their more than ordinary piety and ingenuity." Another of their opponents, Milton's *mere A. S.*, acknowledges the holiness of their lives, their learning and piety.

The Presbyterian controversialists mentioned by Milton are four in number. *Mere A. S.* was Dr. Adam

Stuart. This writer was a Scotsman by birth, and had been a Professor in the University of Sedan. He appeared in London for a few years, although not a member of the Assembly, and published pamphlets against Goodwin and his brethren, one of which is subscribed only by his initials. In 1644 he was invited to Leyden, on the recommendation, it is said, of Salmasius, and became Professor of Philosophy in that University, where he was noted as a keen opponent of Descartes. He died in 1654.¹

Adam Stuart was not a prominent figure in London during his brief visit; and *mere* A. S. suggests that Milton did not know what name these initials represented: some one called A. S.,—whoever he may be.

Samuel Rutherford was Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews. During the sittings of the Assembly he published two treatises, *The Due Right of Presbyteries* and *The Divine Right of Church Government*, to which he specially owes the mention of his name by Milton. But a more remarkable work is his *Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience*, published in 1649. It has been described by Bishop Heber as "perhaps the most elaborate defence of persecution which has ever appeared in a Protestant country;" and it proposes nothing less than the establishment of a Protestant Inquisition. Religious truth is to be defined by the courts of the Church; to depart from it is the sin of heresy, and is to be punished by the civil magistrate, after conviction by the ecclesiastical authority. Rutherford even advocates the penalty of death, citing Scriptural and historical examples. Much of the book is directed against Roger Williams and Jeremy Taylor.

Thomas Edwards, whom Milton calls *shallow*, had studied at Cambridge, and was a Puritan preacher in London without a settled charge. When Goodwin, Nye,

¹ Biographisch Woordenboek der Nederlanden, *Adam Stuart*.

Burroughs, and their friends published the *Apologetical Narration*, Edwards replied to it with a fluent and dreary work entitled *Antapologia*, in which the Independent divines are disparagingly dealt with, and Toleration attacked. This is the work which Milton has specially in view.

He afterwards published a more celebrated book, *Gangraena*—of less importance for our present purpose—where he assails the numerous Sects and Sectaries that had sprung up, to whom the Presbyterians gave less quarter than to the Independents. It is a copious mass of gossip, full of anecdotes which Edwards had been “told by good witnesses,” or had “from a sure hand.” The book is superficial enough to justify Milton’s description of Edwards, but is not without a sense of humour and dexterity in ridicule.

Scotch What d’ye call may be certainly identified. A modern historian of the Westminster Assembly, Hetherington, states that, “of the Scottish Commissioners, Baillie alone expressed himself with bitterness against the Independents”; and Baillie himself freely uses such terms as *heresy* and *heretics* in a pamphlet directed against Goodwin and his party, although he accuses them of causing and encouraging heresy in others, rather than of actually sharing it themselves. The pamphlet in question, *A Dissuasive from the Errors of the Times*, appeared in 1645, when the controversy was at its height. It is a less diffuse and even more emphatic and trenchant attack on the Independents than Edwards’ *Antapologia*.

A strange misapprehension of this sonnet is due to Masson, who represents it as the result of personal provocation, Edwards and Baillie having spoken in slighting terms of Milton’s own pamphlets on Divorce, in incidental passages which have been extracted from the mass of their writings. But it is unnecessary to imagine that Milton had such a motive. His interest in the con-

troversy concerning Independence and Toleration is sufficient to explain the impulse which led him to write the verses: any other theory is gratuitous. But the severity of some of his lines cannot well be defended. Milton was himself an only too emphatic and one-sided disputant.

l. 17. baulk your eyes,—*avoid* or *spare* your ears. The word is used in a similar sense by Cowper:

And such an age as ours baulks no expense,
Except of caution and of common sense.

Tirocinium.

Milton at first wrote:

Clip ye as close as marginal P——'s ears,

the allusion being to William Prynne, whose works are overloaded with marginal references. When these lines were written, Prynne was engaged in a violent polemic against the Independents and the principle of Toleration, which must have attracted Milton's notice. But on second thoughts the line was cancelled, Prynne's former sufferings seeming no matter for jest.

l. 20. New *Presbyter* is but old *Priest* writ large.

The words *Presbyter* and *Priest* are both derived from *πρεσβύτερος*, the latter being the contracted form through the French.

Smart secret reason to prefer: (1) Addressed to a
real person, (2) Not merely a passing
affection, (3) Known & in some degree
returned at the sonnets written in Italian
as the Lady's best.

SONNETS IN ITALIAN.

INTRODUCTION.

AMONG Milton's early poems those in which he speaks of his own feelings with least reserve are those in which his self-revelation is veiled by the use of a foreign language. His Latin verses express the emotions and ardours of the youthful poet with a candid openness; and the Italian sonnets, which have never received their due place in his biography, are a record of his first love.

The person addressed in these poems was a lady of Italian descent, having a foreign type of beauty, new to the poet, with a dark complexion and dark eyes; she had graceful and charming manners; spoke fluently in several languages, of which Italian was one, and English, as we shall see reason to believe, another; was familiar with Italian poetry; and was also an accomplished singer. It would seem that she belonged to a cosmopolitan family which had its attraction for a poet studious of every form of culture who had not yet left his native shore. His regard

for her was something more than a passing admiration. "I bring to you," he writes, "in devotion the humble gift of my heart." It is also evident that she was aware of his feeling, and was not unwilling to make some response; for the sonnets were composed in Italian, rather than English, at her own request, she having said, "It is the language of love."

We cannot tell with precision the date of this episode in Milton's life, still less how it ended; but it took place before his Italian travels in 1638, and probably many years earlier. The poems themselves give testimony to the fact in a manner which is clear and conclusive.

One of the sonnets, page 150, is addressed by name to Charles Diodati, who was the dearest friend of Milton's early youth, and the recipient of his most confidential verses and letters. Of the Latin poems sent to him, the first was composed when Milton was still a Cambridge undergraduate, probably in 1626; another can be dated at Christmas 1629. Among the *Familiar Epistles* there are two which were written to Charles Diodati in September 1637. In the following year Milton set out for Italy, where he arrived in the middle of summer; and soon afterwards Diodati died in London, his burial being recorded in the Parish Register of St. Anne's, Blackfriars, 27 August, 1638.

It is not known when Milton received the news of

his friend's death ; but it reached him, as he relates, when abroad ; and he can hardly have been without knowledge of it during the period which he spent on Italian soil. Postal communication was then easy and familiar ; letters left once a week, and, as we learn from James Howell, a practised traveller, twenty days was the usual time allowed between London and Italy. During his travels Milton cannot have forgotten his friends at home ; and, for obvious reasons, he must have kept in communication at least with his own family, through whom news of others might reach him.

When he passed Bologna, where most of his biographers believe the Italian poems to have been written, Diodati had already lain in the grave for eight months ; had Milton then addressed cheerful verses to him, in ignorance of his fate, the poem must afterwards have had painful associations. It is easier to believe that the Italian sonnets were written when the two friends were still together in England, and their confidential union was still unbroken.

Strong as these considerations are, the poems afford other and even stronger evidence. In some charming lines in the second sonnet Milton compares himself to a youthful shepherdess dwelling on a rugged spot among the mountains, who tends a plant from some garden on the plain below, which cannot flourish in the bleak air, so far from its native clime : so he cultivates the flower of a foreign speech. Italian

verse is the plant thus transported to an alien soil ; and the rugged hill is England, where the poet writes. In the Canzone also he tells us that he is surrounded by youths and maidens who jest at his labours, and ask why he thus makes verses of love in a strange and unknown tongue—*in lingua ignota e strana*. It is unknown to them, for they are English and in England. Other streams, they exclaim, await the poet, on whose banks grows the immortal laurel ; but the other streams with their laurel-crowned shores are, in poetic idiom, his native language, in which he is urged by his fellow-countrymen to write. He is not understood by his own good people, he states in the second sonnet, when he thus changes the speech of the Thames for that of the Arno, at the bidding of Love, who asks nothing in vain.

It is impossible to reconcile these passages with the notion that the sonnets were written in a country where everyone about the poet understood Italian better than himself, and his own people were invisible, inaudible, and far away beyond the Alps.

Let it be observed also that Milton, who keeps the chronological order in the arrangement of his sonnets, has placed the Italian poems *before* that on his twenty-third birthday. Modern editors have placed them *after* it—to accommodate the arrangement to their own theory.

There need be no surprise at Milton's early familiarity with the Italian language. It was still the golden

age of Italian, when both language and literature were regarded as a natural part of a good education. By his father's advice he had learned it from childhood, along with French :

Addere suasisti quos jactat Gallia flores,
Et quam degeneri novus Italus ore loquellam
Fundit.

And it may be remembered that he bought and studied the sonnets of Giovanni della Casa in the year 1629, when his age was twenty-one. To a poet and linguist like Milton it was not more difficult to write Italian sonnets without having visited Italy than to write Greek verses without having visited Greece.

The belief that the poems were composed in Italy has been founded only on a misinterpretation of the opening lines of the first sonnet :

Donna leggiadra, il cui bel nome onora
L' erbosa val di Reno e il nobil varco ;

from which we learn that the lady's name *honours the flowery vale of Reno and the famous ford*. As the river Reno flows near Bologna, it was rashly assumed that she was an inhabitant of that city, and that Milton met her there when he journeyed through it in April or May 1639.

But in reality Milton's allusion to *the flowery vale of Reno* has nothing to do with his own Italian travel ; as his mention in other poems of *Zora's fruitful vale* and *the flowery dale of Sibma* does nothing to suggest a personal visit to Palestine. The meaning of the

lines is different : they indicate that the name of the lady was itself identical with that of the district in which the Reno is situated, and hence that she was called *Emilia*.

The part of Italy bearing that name, one of the regions into which it was divided by Augustus, derived its title from the Via Emilia, the great Roman highway, which is recalled in *Paradise Regained* :

Pretors, Proconsuls to their Provinces
Hasting or on return, in robes of state, . . .
Or embassies from regions far remote,
In various habits, on the Appian road,
Or on the Emilian.

More than once the region is mentioned by Martial :

Funde tuo lacrimas orbata Bononia Rufo,
Et resonet tota plactus in Æmilia ;

and Milton may have met with its name in many books of Italian geography and history. In a popular work of the kind, the *Descrittione di tutta l'Italia*, by Leandro Alberti, a Bolognese, which was well-known and much consulted in England, Emilia is described at length, and the Valle di Reno is particularly celebrated. Alberti writes :

“ Returning to the Via Emilia, we see a long bridge over the Reno, two miles distant from Bologna, by which the Via Emilia is continued ; and having passed it, ascending on the right side of the said river, we first reach the village of Casalecchio, . . . and a little further on we enter into the Valle di Reno, so called from its position along the right bank of the river ; which is most beautiful, fair, fertile, and productive of wheat and other cereals, and of the finest wines, and good fruits of every kind.”

He then depicts certain gardens in the Valle di Reno, which are most fair, adorned with jasmine, roses, and rosemary, having the murmur and whisper of waters descending by many rills, with the singing of birds and everything fitted for pleasure and delight.

But the name of the lady is associated, not only with the Reno, but also with a "famous ford" or *nobil varco*.¹ There is no ford in the Reno itself which deserves to be so called, and attempts to identify such a spot have been fruitless. But Milton spoke of the district of Emilia in general, and was not restricted to one river: he was more likely to mention two, for in his poems such allusions are apt to go in pairs; and he believed that the celebrity of the ford would suffice of itself to mark the second stream, without the actual utterance of its name.

In the eastern part of Emilia there is the most famous ford in the world—that of the Rubicon. Leandro Alberti mentions it, as well as the Reno, in his description of Emilia, and recalls the historic crossing of Julius Caesar. Other authorities speak to the same effect. In a work of reference which was familiar in the seventeenth century, the *Novum Lexicon Geographicum* of Ferrari, we find Emilia defined as the district between Rimini and Piacenza,

¹ The following definitions from Florio's *Dictionary of the Italian and English Tongues*, 1611, may be quoted: "*nobile*—noble, famous, excellent, greatly known;" "*varco*—any ford, ferry, passage, or wading place over a river."

which includes both streams, and the Rubicon itself designated as *fluvius Æmiliæ*. These definitions are repeated by Forcellini, and are correct according to modern boundaries.

Even the mention of the Reno and the Rubicon as the most notable rivers in that part of Italy is not without poetical precedent; as appears from some Latin verses by Francesco Franchini, who alludes to them in the same context, when describing a journey through it in winter from east to west;

Tranantur *Rubiconis* aquae, fora pervia Livi,
Et fora Corneli post cita terga damus;
Ad vada provehimur stagnantis lubrica *Rheni*,
Coenosum Mutinae vix superamus iter.¹

The significance of the lines with which the first sonnet opens thus becomes clear: the knowledge of Italy shown by the poet is derived from books; and it is used for a purpose—to suggest the name of his lady to those who can interpret, while keeping it partly veiled. It was the real name of a real person: had it been a poetical designation, a Stella or a Delia, Milton would have written it without reserve. The use of such allusions to convey it occurred naturally to his mind; for his poems testify everywhere to his interest in classical history and geographical literature.² In *Paradise Lost* streams are frequent

¹ *Delitiæ Poetarum Italorum*, 1608, tom. i. p. 1131.

² "The study of geography is both profitable and delightful." *A Brief History of Muscovia*, p. 1.

landmarks, and designate the countries through which they flow. Canaan is the land that extends

from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts
Egypt from Syrian ground.

And another country, left unnamed, is "the land where flows Ganges and Indus." It is a pleasant and classical device, remarked by Addison, who observes how often Milton has designated places *by those beautiful marks of rivers so frequent among the classical poets*.

The use of allusions, sometimes recondite and far-fetched, to convey the name of the person celebrated by the poet is common among Italian writers of sonnets, who love to play upon words and to follow up any associations they may suggest. Illustrations of the practice are of interest, and afford curious parallels to Milton's passage.

Some are easy and obvious. Barignano, being about to praise the charms of a lady called Beatrice, thus begins—

Donna, ch' avete il bel nome di quella
Che trasse Dante per gli eterni giri.¹

Trissino, addressing Ottavio Farnese, Duke of Parma, opens with a reminiscence of a greater Octavius :

Quel grande Ottavio, il cui bel nome avete
Preso, Signor, nel battezzarvi al fonte,
Di ramo trionfal s' ornò la fronte
Ne l' età giovenil, come voi sete.

¹ *Rime di Diversi Nobili Poeti Toscani*, edited by Dionigi Atanagi, 1565, p. 155.

And Tasso offers a simple problem to the reader, when he states that the name of the lady who is honoured in his lines was also borne by her who armed Mycene against Troy and by a Christian Empress of Rome. Addressing a lady called Flaminia, he falls into a facile pun :

Giovinetta gentil, che' l nome prendi
Da quelle fiamme, che negli occhi porti.

But Tasso's fondness for such verbal ingenuity also leads him to insert his lady's name by combining two words in a manner quite untranslatable, thus addressing the god of Love :

Se ferir brami, scendi al petto, scendi,
E di sì degno cor tuo strale *onora*—

where only the use of a different type can show his device. Ariosto is more poetical when he declares that his lady's name is that of a shrub which grows in desert spots, is shaggy and rough, green in winter as well as in summer, and more pungent in its odour than the myrtle and the pine. The answer to the riddle is *juniper* or *Ginevra*.

Geographical circumstances may be pressed into the same service. Boiardo, being in love with a certain Antonia Caprara, is reminded of a rocky island off the coast of Tuscany, which also is called Caprara : his lady's heart is as hard as that rock, and as indifferent to his love as is the Caprara of the sea to the winds that blow against it. Another method by which a name may suggest a poem is that

of Giambattista Manso, whom Milton met in 1638 at Naples, and with whom he formed a friendship commemorated by both in Latin verse. In a sonnet addressed *To the Folds of the Hill of St. Elmo*, Manso describes the serene beauty of the spot, its brightness and joy, and utters the wish that it may preserve for ever as a secret sign of love the name of his lady, which itself signifies *happy* :

Serbate eterne in voi, del nostro ardore
 Segno, ma occulto, il bel nome di lei
 E la gioiosa mia vita *Felice*.

These examples are many and varied, and amply illustrate this poetic practice. But there is another which deserves citation, for it offers the closest verbal parallel to Milton's :

Donna leggiadra, *il cui bel nome onora*
 L' erbosa val di Reno e il nobil varco.

The lines are by Gandolfo Porrino, a poet of minor note :

O, d' ogni riverenza e d' onor degna,
 Alma mia luce, *il cui bel nome onora*
 L' aria, la terra, e le campagne infiora,
 E di salir al ciel la via c' insegna,
 Luce gentil.

Here the name disclosed by the poet is *Lucia*, or *Light*, which honours the air and the earth, adorns the meadows, and shows the upward path to Heaven.

Milton's allusion to the name of Emilia is in the manner of these Italian amorists, and owes the

obscurity which has shrouded it from all eyes for more than two centuries only to its brevity and compression.

2.

Donna leggiadra, il cui bel nome onora
L'erbosa val di Reno e il nobil varco,
Ben è colui d'ogni valore scarco
Qual tuo spirto gentil non innamora,
Che dolcemente mostrasi di fuora,
De' suoi atti soavi giammai parco,
E i don' che son d'Amor saette ed arco,
Là, onde l'alta tua virtù s' infiora.
Quando tu vaga parli, o lieta canti,
Che mover possa duro alpestre legno,
Guardi ciascun agli occhi ed agli orecchi
L'entrata, chi di te si trova indegno ;
Grazia sola di sù gli vaglia, innanti
Che 'l disio amoroso al cuor s' invecchi.

Translation.

Bright lady, whose fair name honours the flowery vale of Reno and the famous ford, truly is he destitute of all worth that is not moved to love by thy gentle spirit ; which sweetly reveals itself—bounteous in pleasant looks, and the gifts that are the arrows and bow of Love—there, where blooms thy lofty might. When thou speakest in beauty, or singest in joy, so that the trees of the mountains might be moved, let him who is unworthy of thee guard well the entrance of his eyes and ears. Only grace from above may help him, ere amorous longing lingers in his heart.

1. 6. atti soavi,—here *atti* signifies *looks*. Cf.

Quando per gentil atto di salute
Ver bella donna levo gli occhi alquanto.

Cino da Pistoia.

O soave contrada, o puro fiume
Che bagni 'l suo bel viso e gli occhi chiari,
E prendi qualità dal vivo lume,
Quanto v' invidio gli atti onesti e cari !

Petrarch, *Sonnet I.*, III.

Appio connobi agli occhi suoi, che gravi
Furon sempre, e molesti all' umil plebe :
Poi vidi un grande con atti soavi.

Petrarch, *Trionfo della Fama*, I. 88-90.

1. 7. E i don' che son d' Amor saette ed arco,
Là, onde l' alta tua virtù s' infiora.

Là,—there,—i.e. in the lady's eyes.

These lines are no more than a texture of Petrarchian fancies, closely woven together. As Laura's poet has conceived in many places, the god of Love dwells in her eyes with his bow, and her bright glances are the arrows which are aimed at the beholder's heart. In his followers, Italian, French and English alike, the image reappears. Sir Philip Sidney writes that Venus broke the bow and shafts of Cupid, who wept,—

Till that his grandame Nature, pitying it,
Of Stella's brows made him two better bows,
And in her eyes of arrows infinite.

Petrarch also speaks of *virtù*,—power, excellence, or influence,—flowing from the presence of Laura. The *virtù* of her tender feet opens the flowers as she passes through the meadow ; and from her eyes there proceeds *virtù* which conquers those on whom she looks. After her death her power ceases with the closing of her eyes :—

Sua virtù cadde al chiuder de' begli occhi.

The conception may recall a familiar passage in Milton :

With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms.

L'Allegro, 121-3.

Compare the words of Adam to Eve,—

I from the influence of thy looks receive
Access in every virtue.

Paradise Lost, IX. 309-10.

1. 10. Che mover possa duro alpestre legno,—An allusion to the singing of Orpheus, at whose voice, “woods and rocks had ears to rapture.” *Paradise Lost*, VII. 35.

3.

Qual in colle aspro, al imbrunir di sera,
L' avvezza giovinetta pastorella
Va bagnando l' erbetta strana e bella,
Che mal si spande a disusata spera,
Fuor di sua natia alma primavera,
Così Amor meco insù la lingua snella
Desta il fior nuovo di strania favella,
Mentre io di te, vezzosamente altera,
Canto, dal mio buon popol non inteso,
E 'l bel Tamigi cangio col bel Arno.
Amor lo volse, ed io a l' altrui peso
Seppi ch' Amor cosa mai volse indarno.
Deh ! foss' il mio cuor lento e 'l duro seno
A chi pianta dal ciel si buon terreno.

Translation.

As on a rugged hill, at twilight of evening, the youthful shepherdess, accustomed there, waters a strange and beauteous plant, that hardly spreads its leaves in the unfamiliar clime, far from its genial native spring; so Love quickens on my swift tongue the new flower of a foreign speech, as I sing of thee, sweet and noble lady,—not understood by my own good people,—and change the fair Thames for the fair Arno. Love willed it; and I

knew at the cost of others that Love never willed aught in vain. Ah! were but my slow heart and hard bosom as good a soil to Him who plants from Heaven!

The picture of the youthful shepherdess is original and Miltonic. Compare the lament of Eve, on learning that she must depart from the Garden of Eden,—

O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names,
Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
Your tribes, and water from th' ambrosial fount?

Paradise Lost, XI. 273-79.

l. 2. *avvezza*,—here means *at home*, or *brought up there*.

The following illustrations are quoted by Keightley :—

Dove avea lasciato il cavallo, *avvezzo*
In cielo e in terra, a rimontar veniva.

Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, XI. 13.

E questa gente inculta,
Simile al luogo ov' ella è nata è *avvezza*.

Ariosto, *Satires*, VII. *terz.* 40.

Fra i ladroni d' Arabia, o fra simile
Barbara turba *avvezzo* esser tu dei.

Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, VI. 37.

l. 10. E 'l bel Tamigi cangio col bel Arno.

To change the Thames for the Arno signifies no more than to change the English language for Italian, of which Tuscan was the classic form, here figured by the Tuscan river. The same imagery is used by Milton when describing his studies to a Florentine friend: "Even Attic Athens itself with its pellucid Ilyssus, and ancient Rome with its Tiber's bank, have not so much detained me but that I often love to visit your Arno and the hills of Fiesole."—*Epistle to Benedetto Buonmattei*. The pellucid Ilyssus, in such symbolism, is the language and literature of Greece:

the little stony stream itself Milton never saw. In this sense he had often wandered on the banks of Arno before he crossed the Channel. Compare Burns,—

Th' Ilyssus, Tiber, Thames an' Seine,
Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line ;
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
An' cock your crest ;
We'll gar our streams an' burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

Epistle to William Simpson.

l. 11. Amor lo volse,—he has turned from English to Italian at the bidding of his lady herself.

CANZONE.

Ridonsi donne e giovani amorosi,
M' accostandosi attorno, e “ Perchè scrivi,
Perchè tu scrivi in lingua ignota e strana,
Verseggiando d' amor, e come t' osi ?
Dinne, se la tua speme sia mai vana,
E de' pensieri lo miglior t' arrivi.”
Così mi van burlando, “ Altri rivi,
Altri lidi t' aspettan ed altre onde,
Nelle cui verdi sponde
Spuntati ad or ad or a la tua chioma
L' immortal guiderdon d' eterne frondi.
Perchè alle spalle tue soverchia soma ? ”

Canzon, dirotti, e tu per me rispondi,
Dice mia donna, e' l suo dir è il mio cuore,
“ Questa è lingua di cui si vanta Amore.”

Translation.

Amorous youths and maidens gather about me with mirth, and, “ Why dost thou write ? ” they ask, “ Why

dost thou write in a strange and unknown tongue, making verses of love, and how dost thou dare? Tell us; that so thy hope may not be vain, and the best of thy wishes be fulfilled." And thus they jest with me—"Other streams, other banks await thee, and other waves, on whose green margin there sometimes grows, to crown thy head, the immortal guerdon of unfading leaves. Why place upon thy shoulders a superfluous load?"

Song, I will tell thee, and thou shalt answer for me. My lady says, and her words are my heart,—“This is the language in which Love takes pride.”

Those who declare Milton's Italian poems to be little more than a repetition of Petrarchian commonplaces have strangely overlooked both this Canzone and the preceding sonnet, which are perfectly fresh and original, and deal with a situation to which there is no analogy in Petrarch or any of his followers. The poet who writes in a foreign language at his lady's bidding, and because it is more the language of love than his own, introduces a new theme which is taken from immediate reality.

An Italian critic, Eugenio Camerini, has declared the Canzone to be most beautiful, if not entirely faultless, *vaghissima, se non al tutto irreprensibile*. This judgment is quoted with approval by Carducci, who believes that some of Milton's Italian lines would not seem out of place in Dante or Petrarch; adding, however, that the sonnets are frequently hard and laboured, and sometimes disregard the more strict laws of syntax.¹

The Canzone as a poetical form has not had the same popularity in England as the Sonnet; but its structure suggested the metrical basis of Spenser's *Epithalamion* and *Prothalamion*, and of *Lycidas*. Frequently an Italian Canzone closes with an address to the poem itself; a feature imitated here by Milton, and by Spenser:

Song, made in lieu of many ornaments.

¹ *Primi Saggi*, p. 457.

4.

Diodati—e te 'l dirò con maraviglia—
Quel ritroso io, ch' Amor spreggiar solea,
E de' suoi lacci spesso mi ridea,
Gia caddi, ov' uom dabben talor s' impiglia.
Nè treccie d' oro nè guancia vermiglia
M' abbaglian sì, ma sotto nuova idea
Pellegrina bellezza che 'l cuor bea,
Portamenti alti onesti, e nelle ciglia
Quel sereno fulgor d' amabil nero,
Parole adorne di lingua più d'una,
E 'l cantar che di mezzo l' emispero
Traviar ben può la faticosa Luna ;
E degli occhi suoi avventa sì gran fuoco
Che l' incerar gli orecchi mi fia poco.

Translation.

Diodati—and I shall tell it thee with wonder—my stubborn self, that was wont to despise Love and often laughed at his snares, has now fallen where sometimes an upright man is entangled. Neither tresses of gold nor rosy cheek beguiles me thus ; but, under a new form, strange beauty charms my heart, manners that are lofty and modest, and in her gaze a calm radiance of gentle black, delightful speech in languages more than one, and singing that from the mid hemisphere might lure the labouring moon ; and from her eyes there darts such fire that to close my ears would avail me but little.

The young poet here retracts the opinion once expressed in glowing Latin lines, also addressed to Diodati, in which he gives to the maidens of England, with their clear complexion, golden hair and rosy cheeks,

the preference in beauty over all foreign types of loveliness :

Gloria virginibus debetur prima Britannis ;
Extera sat tibi sit femina posse sequi.

Having now seen an Italian face which charms him, he assigns the palm elsewhere.

l. 6. sotto nuova idea,
Pellegrina bellezza, che 'l cuor bea,—

The Platonic *idea* had already found a place in Petrarch,—

In qual parte del ciel, in quale idea
Era l' esempio onde Natura tolse
Quel bel viso leggiadro, in ch' ella volse
Mostrar quaggiù quanto lassù potea ?

Pellegrina usually signifies foreign, but may also mean *rare* or *exquisite*.

l. 11. E 'l cantar che di mezzo l' emispero
Traviar ben può la faticosa Luna.

These lines may recall "the wandering moon" of *Il Penseroso* and "the labouring moon" of *Paradise Lost*. But the main thought was suggested by a line of Virgil,—

"Carmina vel caelo possunt deducere Lunam."

Ecl. VIII. 69.

l. 14. incerar gli orecchi,—to close the ears with wax,—an allusion to the story of Odysseus and the Sirens.

The sonnet to Diodati is modelled on one of the most beautiful of Petrarch's, which has been closely imitated by Bembo ; but Milton's variations are significant :

Grazie ch' a pochi 'l Ciel largo destina ;
Rara virtù, non già d' umana gente ;
Sotto biondi capei canuta mente,
E 'n umil donna alta beltà divina ;
Leggiadria singulare e pellegrina,
E 'l cantar che nell' anima si sente,
L' andar celeste, e 'l vago spirito ardente,
Ch' ogni dur rompe ed ogni altezza inchina ;

E que' begli occhi, che i cor fanno smalti,
 Possenti a rischiarar abisso e notti,
 E torre l' alme a' corpi e darle altrui ;
 Col dir pien d' intelletti dolci ed alti,
 Coi sospiri soavemente rotti :
 Da questi magi trasformato fui.

Translation.

Graces which Heaven in its bounty assigns to few, rare excellence never before known amongst men, a mature mind under golden hair, and lofty divine beauty in a humble lady ; singular and exquisite charm, and singing that is felt in the soul, a divine step, and delightful glowing spirit, which breaks the hard and bends the haughty ; fair eyes which melt the heart, powerful to illumine darkness and night, and to take the soul away and give it to another ; speech full of sweet and lofty thoughts, and sighs softly broken :—these are the magicians by whom I was transformed.

5.

Per certo i bei vostr' occhi, Donna mia,
 Esser non può che non sian lo mio sole,
 Si mi percuoton forte, come ei suole
 Per l' arene di Libia chi s' invia ;
 Mentre un caldo vapor—nè senti pria—
 Da quel lato si spinge ove mi duole,
 Che forse amanti nelle lor parole
 Chiaman sospir ; io non so che si sia.
 Parte rinchiusa e turbida si cela
 Scozzo mi il petto, e poi, n' uscendo poco,
 Quivi d' attorno o s' agghiaccia o s' ingiela ;
 Ma quanto agli occhi giunge a trovar loco
 Tutte le notti a me suol far piovose,
 Finchè mia Alba rivien colma di rose.

Translation.

In truth, Lady mine, it cannot be but that your fair eyes are my sun, for they smite me as powerfully as he beats upon one who makes his way through the Libyan sands; whilst a warm vapour, such as I never felt before, rises from the side where my suffering is, which perhaps lovers in their own language call *sighs*: I know not what it may be. Part thereof, confined and troubled, is hid beneath my breast, and then, escaping into the air, is frozen or congealed. But so much as rises to the eyes makes every night a time of tears, until my Morn returns crowned with roses.

This is the poorest of the Italian sonnets, and one of the few pieces by Milton which we might wish he had condemned to disappear after they had remained unpublished for the Horatian term. Carducci's judgment, *hard and laboured*, is more than deserved by these unhappy lines.

It can but be pleaded that the conceits on which they are founded were not new. Generations of sonnet-writers had compared the beams of their ladies' eyes to burning suns or blazing arrows of fire, by which their hearts were kindled and consumed. Petrarch employed the image before it was too well worn; and his followers were never tired of it. Boiardo writes that love cannot be known to one who has never seen the glance of his lady,—

Che come stral di foco il lato manco
 Sovente incende, e mette fiamme al core.

Bembo has the same notion: the beauteous eyes of his lady have wounded all his left side.

From Italy the conceit found its way to France, and ran riot in the pages of Ronsard, who is inexhaustible on the theme of *eyes, sun, and heart*:—

“ Des beaux yeux bruns, les soleils de mon cuer.”

“ D'autre torche mon cœur ne pouvoit s'allumer,
 Sinon de tes beaux yeux, où l'amour me convie.”

“ Le premier jour du mois de May, Madame,
Dedans le cueur je senti vos beaux yeux,
Bruns, doux, courtois, rians, délicieux,
Qui d'un glaçon feroient naistre une flamme

Sighs and tears were likewise the familiar matter of amorous writing, and frequent in Petrarch. Bitter tears flow from the poet's face, with a painful wind of sighs, when his lady turns her glance upon him ; his warm sighs are bidden to seek her cold bosom, and to break the ice which binds her pity ; a tempest of tears and the cruel gale of infinite sighs drive his bark through a dangerous sea. Concerning sighs and tears, heat and cold, Ronsard has also much to tell :—

“ Las ! je me plains de mile et mile et mile
Soupirs, qu'en vain des flancs je vais tirant,
Et ma chaleur doucement respirant
Trempee en l'eau qui de mes pleurs distile.”

Milton has united such figures, the abstract of a thousand sonnets, into a strange and heavy consistency. In the next sonnet he is once more original.

1. 10. *Scosso mi il petto*,—is almost certainly a printer's error. The true reading is probably *Sotto il mio petto*.

6.

Giovane, piano, e semplicetto amante,
Poichè fuggir me stesso in dubbio sono,
Madonna, a voi del mio cuor l' umil dono
Farò divoto. Io certo a prove tante
L' ebbi fedele, intrepido, costante,
Di pensieri leggiadro, accorto, e buono.
Quando rugge il gran mondo e scocca il tuono
S' arma di se e d' intero diamante ;

Tanto del forse e d' invidia sicuro,
Di timori e speranze al popol use,
Quanto d' ingegno e d' alto valor vago,
E di cetra sonora e delle Muse.
Sol troverete in tal parte men duro
Ove Amor mise l' insanabil ago.

Translation.

Young, gentle and simple lover that I am, and in doubt how to fly from myself, to you, Lady, I will make in devotion the humble gift of my heart. In many trials I have known it faithful, dauntless and loyal; fair, wise and good in its thoughts. When the great sky resounds and thunder roars, it arms itself with itself, as with complete adamant; as heedless of chance and envy, of common hopes and fears, as it is covetous of genius and lofty worth, and of the sounding lyre and of the Muses. Only there will you find it less hard, where Love placed his incurable sting.

1. 2. Poichè fuggir me stesso in dubbio sono,—another reminiscence of Petrarch :—

Nè pur il mio secreto e 'l mio riposo
Fuggo, ma più me stesso e' l mio pensiero.

The poet would fain flee from himself and from his own thoughts, and to escape them will give away his heart to his lady. After this conventional opening there follows a portrait of Milton which would have been familiar to all, had it been written in English. But the last two lines are again in the sonneteering vein.

APPENDIX
OF
DOCUMENTS AND AUTHORITIES

LADY MARGARET LEY AND COLONEL HOBSON.

1.

Will of James Ley, Earl of Marlborough, signed, 21 Feb., 1629, proved, 17 March, 1629. (27 Ridley.)

“ And whereas I have taken two severall bondes of Phillip Burlamachi of London Merchant in the names of my daughters the Lady Margaret and Lady Phebe Ley, the one for the payment of the some of one thousand poundes and the other for the payment of five hundred poundes, I doe declare and bequeath that the said somes of one thousand poundes and five hundred poundes shall presently bee to the use of my said two daughters as part of their portions. Also I give and bequeath unto my said daughter Margaret the some of seaven hundred and fiftie pounds of lawfull money of England to be paid to her upon the daie of her marriage or within twelve months next after my decease, which of them shall first happen.” A similar provision for Lady Phœbe Ley.

2.

Calendar of State Papers, Dom., 1627-8, p. 448.

Commission from Sec. Conway, as Lord Lieutenant of Hants and Captain of the Isle of Wight, appointing John Hobson to have the charge and leading of the company of Ningwood, in the said Isle, as their Captain and leader.

3.

Marriage Licences issued by the Bishop of London, Harleian Society, 1887.

28 Dec., 1641. John Hopson Esq. of Ningwood, Isle of Wight, Widower, 44, and Dame Margaret Ley, daughter to the Rt. Hon. James Ley, Earl of Marlborough, decd., Spinster, 30 and upwards; at St. Giles, Cripplegate, or St. Mary, Aldermanbury.

4.

Parish Register of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

Marriages. 30 Dec., 1641. John Hopson Esqr. and the Lady Margaret Ley, dau: to the Rt. Honble. James Earle of Marleborough deceased.

5.

Calendar of the Committee for the Advance of Money, p. 356.

11 March, 1644. John Hobson, Aldersgate St., assessed at £400.

18 March, 1644. Order that as he is Lieut. Colonel to the Westminster Regiment, is in service for Parliament, and has lent £47 6s. 8d., his assessment be discharged till further notice.

6.

Committee of Militia at the Savoy, Aug. 1643 to Jan. 1645,—Lay Subsidy 253, 12.

Moneys raised for fines of severall persons that intended to goe out in person, or send out men to serve for them, in the late Expedition to Bazing and Alton. . . .

In Lieutenant Colonell Hopsons Co., etc.

7.

Parish Register of St. Botolph's, Aldersgate.

Burials. 13 January, 1657, Dyed Collonell Hobson.
Buryed the 17th.

8.

*Will of John Hopson of Ningwood, signed, 10 Dec., 1656,
proved, 29 Jan., 1657. (22 Ruthen.)*

The testator mentions his three daughters, Margaret, Mary and Elizabeth, brothers Antony and Richard, and four sisters. He gives and bequeaths a yearly rent of one hundred pounds to his wife, Rachel Hopson, who is appointed sole executrix.

9.

Probate Act Book, January, 1657.

John Hopson. The nine and Twentyeth day was proved the will of John Hopson late of Ningwood in the parish of Shalfleet in the Countye of Southampton Esqr., but in London, deceased, by the Oathe of Rachell Hopson the relicte sole Extrixe.

See also Berry's *County Genealogies, Hants*, pedigree of the family of Hobson of Ningwood; *Memoirs of Sir John Oglander*, 1888, p. 51.

The name is spelt indifferently "Hopson" or "Hobson." The latter spelling is used in a Herald's Visitation. of 1634, Harleian MS., 1544, p. 115; the former by the Colonel in his will.

GEORGE AND KATHARINE THOMASON.

1.

Parish Register of Westham, Sussex.

Burials. 21 July, 1646, William Thomason, gent., three times bailiff of Pemsey.

21 May, 1647. Mr Miles Thomasin, Bailly.

2.

Will of William Thomason of Westham, Sussex, signed 13 July, 1646, proved, 4 Aug., 1646. (115 Twisse.)

The testator mentions his daughter Phillip Thomason, son Miles Thomason, and brothers George Thomason and Roger Thomason.

3.

Parish Register of St. Dunstan's in the West.

Burials. 8 Sept., 1614. Fraunces Hutton, shoemaker, out of Chancery Lane, was buried.

4.

Commissary Court of London, Admon. Act Book, 1604-18, f. 209.

14 Sept., 1614. Granted to Henry Fetherstone, maternal uncle of Katharine Hutton, daughter of Francis Hutton, late of the parish of St. Dunstan's in the West, deceased intestate, administration of goods during the minority of the said Katharine Hutton; Mary, relict of the deceased, renouncing.

5.

Will of Cuthbert Fetherstone, signed, 5 Feb., 1613; Memorandum, 29 Nov., 1615. (13 Cope.)

"And further my will and meaning is that the said Raphe Fetherstone my sonne his Executors Administrators and Assigns, in further consideration of the said Messuage or Tenement so devised unto him by the said Cuthbert, shall paye or cause to be paide unto Catheryne Hutton, daughter of my son in law Fraunces Hutton deceased, the sum of Twentie pounds of lawfull money of England within three monthes after the decease of the said Catheryne my wyfe."

6.

Will of Ralph Fetherstone, signed, 16 Sept., 1631, proved, 5 Dec., 1631. (131 St. John.)

“ I give and bequeath to my neece Katherine Hutton the daughter of my sister Mary deceased the some of two hundred pounds of lawful money of England, to be paid unto her at the date of her marriage, and in the meantyme to be put out and imployed for the most benefitt and profit that can be thereof made for the good and benefitt of my said kinswoman Katherine Hutton.”

7.

Parish of St. Dunstan's in the West,

Parish Register, Burials. 12 Dec., 1646, Mrs Kathrn Thomason wife of George Tompson, bur: church.

Churchwardens Accounts. 12 Dec., 1646, ffor buriall of Mrs Katherine Thomson from Pauls Churchyard in the body of the Church, etc.

8.

Will of Henry Fetherstone, signed, 1 March, 1647, proved, 22 April, 1647. (68 Fines.)

“ I give to each and every childe of my Neece Katherine Thomason deceased which shall be living at my death Twenty pounds a peece to be paid unto and kept by their father for their use.”

9.

Hearth Tax, 1662, *Lay Subsidy*, 252, 27.

In the Precinct of St. Faith's, Pauls Churchyard, . . . George Thomason, vi hearths.

10.

Will of George Thomason, signed, 21 Nov. 1664, proved, 27 April, 1666. (64 Mico.)

"And if I dye within the Cittye of London or within tenne miles thereof, my desire is to be buried in the South Ile of the parish of Saint Dunstan in the West, as nere to my late dear and only wife Katherine Thomason as conveniently may be." Eldest son George, eldest daughter Katharine, now wife of William Stonestreet, four younger children, Edward, Grace, Henry and Thomas.

11.

Probate Act Book, 27 April, 1666.

Probate of the will of George Thomason, lately of the parish of St. Faith's, London, but deceased at Mickleham in Surrey.

See also *Visitation of London*, 1634, Harleian Society, vol. xv. p. 273, *Pedigree of the Family of Fetherstone*; Berry's *County Genealogies, Sussex*, p. 233, *Pedigrees of the Families of Fetherstone, Thomason, and Stonestreet*; *Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers and Manuscripts collected by George Thomason*, by G. K. Fortescue, 1908.

Here may also be included the following poem, which is preserved in manuscript in the British Museum. It is bound up, along with other compositions on the same occasion, in the volume which contains the Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Thomason, 11 April, 1659, by Edward Reynolds, D.D. *Thomason Tracts*, E. 1820.

*Upon the happy though early Death of his dear Sister,
Mrs. Elizabeth Thomason, dying of a fever.*

Too hasty Sisters, which scarce had begun
To spin this finer thread, but straight they've done.
Too fine indeed 'twas drawn, and proved thereby
Too weak for to support mortality.
Alas ! Alas ! thus does the purest breath
Soonest evaporate and yield to Death.
Thus is the purest flame of virgin life
Scarce in, when out ; and to the endless grief
Of breathing friends leaves neither flesh nor spark
To light them from the miseries of the dark.
Thus to my grief, thy joy, dear soul, thou'rt gone
From us, from sin, from all that thou hast done,
To those blest mansions where thy speedier hope
Long since arrived, and set the door wide ope
For thy refined clay. Thy soul made haste,
And went up long before, to see and taste
The endless joys, which 'tis our greatest bliss,
Whilst here, to wish and long for. Oh ! 'twas this
Bright, glorious Heaven foreseen that made
Thee post so fast from hence, where nought but shade
And blackness, grief and sins do cloud our days,
And make it night. Now art thou crowned with rays
From that blest Sun whose rising first did show
We can see light, we who do dwell below,
And, wandering in this vale of misery,
Walk sadly weeping for our sins and thee.
Oh ! had my tears come soon enough to quench
Thy raging flame, which boldly dared entrench
On purest life ! Oh ! had my sighs but come
So timely to prevent thy early doom,
By blowing out that fire which boldly preyed
On thy sweet body, now in ashes laid !
Vain wishes ! Why should I desire to be
Preventer of thy due felicity ?
Why should I stop thy passage to the skies,
And to thy God ? Thou diedst his sacrifice,

A sweet burnt offering, which thy sweetest King
 In a rich censer, sweetest soul, does bring
 Up to his throne, to that great Deity
 Who deigned, before thou livedst, to die for thee.
 Die then to live, for He lives who was dead,
 Blest soul, thy King, thy Saviour, and thy Head.

G. Thomason, Frater.

EDWARD LAWRENCE.

1.

Letter from Henry Lawrence to Sir Simonds D'Ewes.
 Harleian MS. 374, f. 266.

Accepi tandem literas tuas (vir ornatissime) ac simul amoris tui erga nos pignus eruditos codices, iam secundo typis mandatos, dignos sane qui omnium animis imprimantur, iis praesertim quibus cum publico negotio res est. . . .

Filius meus natu maximus tredecim annorum puer (quo nunc etiam amanuensi utor, ipse non satis rectâ valetudine) se tibi commendatissimum esse desiderat, et versionem hanc Gallicam, quam literatissimae Principis nomini dicavit ut aequo animo accipere digneris obnixè flagitat. . . .

Tibi addictissimum,
 He. Lawrence.

Altenae, Jan. 21, 1646, Stilo loci.

2.

Letters from Henry Oldenburg to Edward Lawrence,
Archives of the Royal Society.

Al Signr mio Colendisso

Edouardo Lorenzo.

Non potendo io, Signr mio honoratiss^o, senza macchia d'ingratitude tacere, mando a V.S. il mio riconosci-

mento di vostri favori nel dialetto italiano ; nel quale, senza lusingharvi, havete fatto un progresso sì notabile, ch'io meno maraviglia. Se V.S. lo gradisca, potremo essercitarci l'un l'altro per questo commercio litterario.

Mentre, io mi goderò per qualche tempo di questa piccola villetta, ove son libero dai romori e strepiti, che ingombrano e stordino il mondo. Diceva Pindaro, che sempre appresso d'un bene, havevan i dii immortali appiccati due mali. Io ben ardisco dire, che in queste grandezze e pompe mondane appresso d'un contento vi son' attaccati due dispiaceri.

Adriano Imperatore, già grandiss^o capitano, alla fine si ridusse in una villa, la dove tranquillamente visse sette anni, e morendo lasciò chiariss^a testimonianza, quanto la vita degl' honori e grandezze non sia vera vita, perche fece nella sua sepoltura scrivere queste parole : Quì giace Adriano, la cui età fù di molti anni, mà non ne visse più che sette.

Ma questo discorso è forse troppo filosofico, e gradito da pochi. Ni son le nature, i piaceri, i giovamenti pari ed eguali in tutti huomini ; molte cose dilettono un animo, lequale annojano un altro, e di quelle che Heraclito amaramente piangeva, Democrito per contrario rideva allegramente. Per mio, son certo che si trovan nel mondo cagioni assai per far l'un et l'altro.

Io spero, che V.S. non è tanto impieghato nel corteggiar le donne, che non mi possa comunicar le cose che si fanno nel parlamento ed essercito. Non dubito, che la sapienza del Protettore e del suo consilio gravissimo non sia bastante da sviluppar qualsisia intrico negotio, e da prevenir che non si fracassino l'un l'altro, ni mettino la gente in nuova confusione. Ne dite mi, vi pregho, il vostro sentimento, e state sicuro, ch'io son cordialmente,

Di V. Sigria
Fedeliss^o amico e servitore.

3.

Praestantiss^o D^{no} Edw. Laurentio

H. Old. Sal.

Commorandi sedem cum fixerim in urbe litterata, ut linguà inde litteratorum ad te scriberem, fas erat. Fecissem id citius, si res meas maturius composuissem. Diverti hñc (si scire hujusmodi nugas cupis) apud viduam, quæ æquo satis pretio hospitium simul et victum mihi præbet, inque urbis parte saluberrima domicilium suum habet. Vicinus sum collegio Wadhamensi, adeoque D^{ri} Wilkenio, qui nudiustertius hñc redux, contrahendæ nunc secum consuetudinis facultatem mihi præbet.

Videram jam, illo adhuc absente, hortum ejus ingeniosè profectò concinnatum cultumque, ubi amœnitas certat cum utilitate, et ingenium cum industria. Hortulanum arguit, indulgentem voluptatibus animi, *i.e.* veris, et facultatum suarum ac boni otii dispendio nonnisi futura consecrantem. Et sanè (si evagari liceat) hujusmodi sunt illæ quas vir sapiens venatur deliciæ, quotiescunque à seriis vacat: veram istæ pulchritudinem ingenio inscribunt, animorum nubila serenant, et potentissimis insuper ætatis nostræ affectibus frenum injiciunt. Gaudium illud, quod ex gula aliisve corporis voluptatibus nascitur, mentitum est ac volucre, et in ipsa herba emoritur, quin immo plures in exitium præcipites agit. Vana sunt et pernicioosa quæcumque vulgò æstimamus; id fatemur et querimur omnes; at quantæ sit molis, ea debellare, ostendunt plerique mortalium, qui succubuere.

Causam si requiras, et mihi tecum permittas philosophari, in promptu habent unâ voce Græci, vid. *Ἀπειροκαλιαν*, veri pulchri, verique boni ignorantiam vel languidam saltem et vacillantem de eodem persuasionem. Putasne, amabo, si veræ sapientiæ decorem divinamque ejus præstantiam explicatam apertè oculisque nostris jugiter obversantem haberemus rerum humilium et sordidarum curâ distineri quenquam posse?

Fieri id non magis potest, quàm ut humile quid sapiat animus æternitatem seriò cogitans. Illam vero sapientiam cùm maxima pars nostrum vel ignoret vel indubium cum Scepticis vocet, evilesce apud plurimos necesse est, qui proinde ad ineptias et vilia dilapsi, similes sunt infelicibus illis procis Penelopes, qui, cùm ipsâ non potirentur, ad cultum famularum ejus se convertebant. Id passim solenne fuit hactenus, tum alibi, tum in Academiis, ubi pro sapientia et cognitione solida umbram sectati fuimus, et opinionum litiumque bivii distracti cum ratione insanivimus.

Videre tamen mihi videor in hac Musarum sede nonnullos, qui solidioribus, quàm alios, studiis animos tradunt, et Theologiæ Scholasticæ ac nominalis philosophiæ pertæsi, utriusque rem ac veritatem amplecti cœperunt. Sunt sanè hîc loci, qui scientiæ solidæ incubant, et callem Aristotelicis hactenus et vitilitigatoribus tritum deserere audent, et tutiorem juxta ac præclariorem viam inire: judicantes insuper, non adeò senuisse mundum, nec ætatem nostram adeò emedullatam, ut nihil magis memorabile producere possit. Larem hîc ad tempus ponere sollicitor, ubi si opella mea fautoribus meis et amicis usui esse posset, voti damnarer, et me feliciorum, quàm hactenus, judicarem.

Tu ita de me sentias velim, Ornatissime Laurenti, me singulari in te studio et affectu ferri, quamvis haud sit opis meæ, eundem ex voto testatum facere. Te ingenuè natum et enutritum, scientiam ac virtutem puto colere, quæ ut accedente paulatim experientiâ et judicio, ad maturitatem summam producantur, ex animo comprecor. Spero te cum fratre hac ætate aliquando huc excursurum; et interea, si qua in re bene de te mereri possim, imperaturum. Locus hic rerum novarum sterilis. Si quid fortè tibi innotuerit vel de Classe nostra, vel ex Polonia, amico impertiri tuo ne graveris. Salutem utrique parenti tuo officiosissimam ut ex me dicas, et ipsorum me cultoribus accenseas, impensè rogo. Vale.

4.

A Mons^r Lawrence.

Mons^r, ie le croiois mon devoir, de vous tesmoigner aussi bien par escrit, que de bouche les sentimens que i'ay pr les faveurs, que ie receus, estant à Londres, de Mons^r v^re pere et de vous mesmes. ie vous supplie, de vouloir croire, que i'en auray la souvenance toujours vive, et chercheray toutes les occasions pr vous convaincre de ma gratitude. Cependant, i'ay asteur choisy la solitude pr quelque temps, et si vous voulez, que ie ne l'aye pas triste, faites moy part, s'il vous plait, des nouvelles qui naissent au lieu où vous estes. Si on a fait aucun redressemt en la loy, si l'on s'est determiné à quelque nouvelle expedition par mer, si se fera une bonne correspondence avec la France, et encore si on se commence à se preparer pr la convocaõn du parlem^t, ces sont les principales choses, desquelles ie serois tresais de recevoir v^re esclaircissem^t.

Pour la Cour, on pense que son Altesse n'y fera pas si grand estat, comme des autres Princes. La sage conduite et la fortitude sont les vrais pilliers auxquels s'appuye le salut et la fermeté d'un Estat. Des autres choses on se passe tant plus aisem^t, que l'on s'est assuré de celles lá. Si pourtant une cour se forme avec plus de splendeur, ie me persuade, Mons^r, que parmy la corruption de ce siecle et dans l'autorité que le vice s'y est acquise, vous aurez la hardiesse d'estre homme de bien, et de ne rougir point des vertus Chrestiennes. C'est croyance de

Mons^r
V^re tres affect. et tres
humble serv.

H. O.

10 d'Avril,
1654

5.

A Mons^r Lawrence

Mons^r, ie l'advoue liberalem^t, que vous avez raison d'estre lassé de v^re correspondance, et de me renvoyer aux gazettes imprimées de 2 sols. Car ie considere que ie le suis seul, qui en tire l'avantage, et satisfais à ma curiosité : vous M^r, ne recevant rien de moy qui puisse compenser la peine et l'ennuy que ie vous y donne. C'est pourquoy ie n'ay point du tout de quoy me plaindre, s'il vous resolvez de couper le commerce des lettres, et me laisser à l'informaon des gazettiers, qui ne nous manquent iamais, et qui tirent de nous constamm^t 2 fois 2 sols par semaine.

Je vous remercie pourtant de vos dernieres, et particulierem^t de l'enclose de Paris. Je suis aussi tresaise, que M^r Whitlock est returné bien satisfait et de sa depeche, et de la personne de ceste grande reyne. Certainem^t c'est la beauté d'esprit que ravit les beaux esprits par dessus toute autre. Elle ne s'en va point avec la jeunesse comme fait celle du corps, qui comme une fleur leger, s'enfuit aux premieres approches de la vieillesse. Il me semble, qu'un pais si rude comme la Suede n'est pas capable de tenir une vertu si grande et si bien polie. Il y a raison donc, qu'un chef d'œuvre de la nature, comme l'on dit, que celle ci, se promene par l'univers, et se rende connue et admirée d'un chacun par sa presence. Si elle vient en ce pais icy, il ne peut pas estre matiere de question, si elle le fait pour voir l'Angleterre ou son grand Protecteur. Autrefois quantité des Princes vinrent en ce pais icy pr y voir leur heroine. Asteur, ce me semble, une heroine se prepare pr venir voir le plus grand Heros du Siecle.

Certes vre Reyne Elisabeth estoit en son temps une princesse non-pareille, de la quelle celuy mesme, qui l'excommunia, parloit avec estime. Mais, ie croy,

la Reyne de Suede tache la surmonter, parce qu'en faisant sauter de franche volonté une couronne de sa teste, elle semble viser à quel chose plus relevée qu'une couronne. Et quoyqu'il en soit, ie ne scaurois pas croire, que c'est une pure caprice de femme, qui l'a fait resoudre et accomplir une telle action, et ie croy qu'un peu de temps nous en donnera l'interpretatōn. Cependant et pr jamais ie suis

Monsr

Vre tres humble et obeissant serviteur

H. O.

6.

Return of Members of Parliament, 1213-1702. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 1878, p. 506.

Parliament of England, 1656.

Pembroke. Edward Lawrence, esq. of St. Margaret, county Hertford, *vice* Colonel John Clerke, who elected to sit for county Cardigan. 11 Nov., 1656.

7.

Inscription in the Church of St. Margaret's, Hertfordshire.

Here lyeth the body of Ed. Lawrence Esq. and also of the Lady Martha daughter of Rich. Earle of Barra-more by Martha his wife sister of the said Edward who deceased in the year of our Lord 1657.

8.

An Exact Accompt of the Receipts and Disbursements expended by the Committee of Safety upon the Emergent Occasions of the Nation. 1660.

Item. Paid for three great Saddles for the Lord Lawrence's son, and for Provender for his lofty Steeds, ever since the Protector's Political Death. 500, 00, 00.

Item. Reimbursed to the said Lord Lawrence several sums of money which his eldest son had squandered away upon Poets and Dedications to his Ingenuity, to the value of five hundred pounds more. 500, 00, 00.

(This is a Royalist pamphlet, issued on the eve of the Restoration, when the Commonwealth party was in collapse. It contains jests at the expense of Lambert, Vane, Fleetwood, and many others, all in the form of imaginary repayments of imaginary outlay.

It is evident that two sons of Lord President Lawrence are referred to. His *eldest son*, the friend of poets and recipient of their verses, is no longer alive. The sums supposed to be refunded are sums which he *had* squandered away; the futility of the poetic admiration he had received, now that he himself is dead, being the point of the jest, so far as it has any. The allusion is to the poems of Milton and Davenant, which must have circulated in manuscript. The *son* mentioned in the first paragraph is Henry).

See also *Gentleman's Magazine*, July, 1815, "History of the Ancient Family of Lawrence"; Works of Sir William Davenant, 1673, p. 309; *Dict. of Nat. Biogr.*, Henry Lawrence, Henry Oldenburg.

CYRIACK SKINNER.

1.

Will of William Skinner of Thornton College in the County of Lincoln, signed, 3 Aug., 1627, proved, 1 Feb., 1628. (12 Barrington.)

Being sick in body, but of sound and perfect remembrance, he makes his last will and testament. He desires to be buried in the Chapel of the College of Thornton Curtis, leaves his personal property to be divided between his children, and appoints Bridget, his wife, and John Bradley to be sole executors.

2.

Parish Register of Barrow-on-Humber, Lincolnshire.

Christenings. 18 Nov., 1627. Cyriacus filius Guilhelmi Skinner Esq. et Bridgettae uxoris ejus baptizatus fuit decimo octavo die Novembris.

3.

Records of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, vol. i. Admissions, p. 256.

31 July, 1647. Cyriack Skynner, 3d son of William S., late of Thornton College, co. Linc. arm., decd.

4.

Will of Bridget Skinner of Thornton College in the County of Lincoln, signed 26 Sept., 1648, proved, 18 June, 1653. (90 Brent.)

The testatrix leaves all her lands and tenements in the County of Lincoln to her youngest son Cyriack Skinner, to whom she also bequeaths all her goods and chattels whatsoever, except a few legacies; Cyriack Skinner to be sole executor.

5.

Administration Act Book, 1700.

20 August. Administration of the goods of Cyriack Skinner, late of the parish of St. Martin's in the Fields, granted to his daughter, Annabella.

See also Maddison's *Lincolnshire Pedigrees*, Harleian Society, vol. iii. p. 886, *Pedigree of the Family of Skinner*; Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, edited by Andrew Clark, vol. i. p. 289; Masson's *Life of Milton*, vol. iv. p. 620, vol. v. p. 703.

KATHARINE WOODCOCK.

1.

Parish Register of St. Mary Woolnoth.

Christenings. 17 May, 1599. Joseph, son of John Sudbury, Leatherseller.

11 April, 1602. John, son of John Sudbury, Leatherseller.

9 March, 1606. James, son of John Sudbury, Stationer.

25 March, 1608. Elizabeth, daughter of John Sudbury, Leatherseller.

Burials. 3 Nov., 1610. Parnell, wife of John Sudbury, Leatherseller.

2.

Will of John Sudbury, Citizen and Leatherseller of London,
signed, 16 Dec., 1620, proved, 29 Jan., 1621. (6 Dale.)

Legacies to Katharine, his wife, and to his four children, Joseph, John, James, and Elizabeth, to be paid at their several ages of one and twenty; to Katharine his wife "the house wherein I now dwell in Tower Street."

3.

Will of James Sudbury of the City of London, gentleman,
signed, 8 June, 1627, proved, 12 July, 1630. (67 Scroope.)

"Imprimis. I give and bequeath unto my mother in lawe fortie shillings to buy her a ring. . . . Item. I give and bequeath unto Mr. Richard Woodcock and to his wife fortie shillings apeece to buy them Rings. . . . Item. I give and bequeath unto my brother in lawe William Woodcock and to my Sister his wife the

sum of fiftie pounds apeece of lawfull money of England. And I doe devise and bequeath unto such Child or Children as my said Sister Woodcocke now goeth with all the sum of one hundred pounds of lawfull money of England, to be paid unto him her or them at their ages of twenty and one years or daies of marriage which shall first happen. Item. I give unto my brother George Woodcocke fortie shillings and unto John Woodcocke the like sum of fortie shillings. Item. I give and bequeath unto Mary Woodcocke Susan Woodcocke and Anne Woodcocke sisters of my brother in law William Woodcocke the sum of forty shillings apeece to buy them Rings."

Legacies to "my Cosin Joane Gardiner," and others.

4.

Parish Register of St. Dunstan's in the East.

Christenings. 1628. Katherin, daughter of William Woodcock the second of Aprill.

1632, Marye, daughter of William Woodcock and Elizabeth his wife, Dec. 2.

5.

Cotton v. Sudbury and Woodcock, Chancery Proceedings, Charles I., C. 63, 10.

17 May, 1636. Roger Cotton of the City of London, Esquire, orator, states that Robert Cotton, hitherto of Clavering in the county of Essex, Esquire, his grandfather, was lawfully possessed of divers grounds, pastures, lands, closes, meadows and woods, called Bonnington *alias* Bollingtons, and being so possessed made his last Will, thereby devising the said lands called Bollingtons to Lettice his wife for the term of eighteen years, at the expiration of which term he devised the same to Edmund Cotton, his son, the orator's father, for the term of his

natural life, and after his decease to the eldest male issue of the said Edmund, and made Lettice, his wife, his sole executrix.

In 1606 the said Edmund died, and the orator being his eldest son, and of the age of twelve years, and beyond the seas in the Low Countries, the premises called Bollingtons did by right belong to him.

But one Richard Woodcock, late of Clavering in the county of Essex, gentleman, being tenant to the said premises, obtained and got into his hands divers writings concerning them, and amongst them the original Indenture of Lease; saying that the orator's father had the said lands only for his life, and that after his death they belonged to the Executors of Lettice Cotton, and that he, the said Richard Woodcock, had purchased the said Lease from the Executors of the said Lettice, or from the orator's father or some of them; whereas they had no right to sell the same, the said Richard being well acquainted with the last Will of the orator's late grandfather.

Richard Woodcock refuses to deliver up the deeds and evidences, and combining with one Parish, late of London, haberdasher, and with John Sudbury of Clavering aforesaid how to defraud the orator of the said premises, they have made and contrived several estates amongst themselves of the said premises, by reason whereof the orator does not know in whom the same is.

6.

Cotton v. Sudbury and Woodcock, Chancery Proceedings, Charles I., C. 64, 25.

20 July, 1636. The Answer of John Sudbury, gent. to the Bill of Complaint of Roger Cotton, Esq.

The defendant states that he believes the defendant Richard Woodcock was heretofore seised in a messuage and divers freehold lands and tenements in Clavering

in the County of Essex, called Bollingtons. And the said Richard Woodcock, about eleven years since, upon the marriage of William Woodcock, son and heir of the said Richard, to Elizabeth, this defendant's sister, settled the said messuage and lands by Indenture upon the said William, after the decease of him, the said Richard; and, after making the said Indenture, the said Richard Woodcock demised the premises to William, his son, for the term of forty years at the rent of £60 per annum. Under the title and interest of the said lease this defendant holds the lands and hereditaments called Bollingtons, and pays the rent of £60 to the said Richard Woodcock.

7.

Ibid. The several Demurrer of Richard Woodcock, gent., one of the defendants to the Bill of Complaint of Roger Cotton, Esq.

The defendant does not acknowledge any of the matters in the Bill of Complaint to be true, believing that the complainant has exhibited his bill merely to vex and trouble him, this defendant, who is now a prisoner for debt in His Majesty's Prison of the King's Bench, so that he could not defend the suit; as the said complainant fourteen years ago brought a bill of complaint for the same matters against this defendant, which was not further proceeded with until now.

8.

Cotton v. Woodcock, Chancery Proceedings, Charles I., C. 65, 9.

The answer of Richard Woodcock, gent. to the Bill of Complaint of Roger Cotton, Esq.

3 August, 1636. The said Richard Woodcock declares that he has for many years been seised in his demesne as of fee in the manor or farm of Bonnington *alias*

Bollingtons, situated in Clavering in the County of Essex, and of all the lands and tenements pertaining thereto.

About forty years ago Edmund Cotton, now deceased, father of Roger Cotton, and Stephen Growte, now also deceased, pretended that the father of the said Edmund had in his lifetime certain lands to the value of £20 yearly belonging to the said manor of Bollingtons, which by his will he bequeathed to his wife, Lettice; Stephen Growte being the surviving executor of the said Lettice. And this defendant, wishing to clear his lands from their said pretended title, did by deed of bargain and sale buy the said land for the use of him, Richard Woodcock, and after his decease to the use of his son, William Woodcock, and his heirs for ever.

And this defendant, by Indenture of Lease, demised and granted to the said William Woodcock the manor of Bollingtons for the term of forty years for a certain yearly rent; and about two years past this defendant, for valuable consideration, sold his rent reserved upon the said lease to Elizabeth Clark and Mary Clark; so that now this defendant claims no interest in the said premises.

9.

Cotton v. Conyers and others, Chancery Proceedings, Charles I., C. 92, 51.

The several answer of John Cooke and Elizabeth his wife.

2 Jan., 1637. Elizabeth Cooke believes it to be true that Richard Woodcock, her father-in-law, was for many years seised in his demesne as of fee of the said manor or farm; and that he, upon the marriage of William Woodcock, his eldest son and heir, which was about eleven years since, settled the same lands upon the said William Woodcock and his heirs in reversion.

The said Richard Woodcock, through his engagements

for the said William Woodcock and otherwise, fell into sundry debts to several persons, and in particular stood bounden to this defendant Elizabeth and to Mary Clark her sister, two of the daughters of Katharine Woodcock, then and now wife of the said Richard Woodcock, in two several obligations, which did amount on the whole to the sum of one hundred and five pounds.

And the said Richard Woodcock being very willing and desirous to settle his said debts to this defendant and her sister, and the said William Woodcock then offering and faithfully promising to satisfy and discharge all the said Richard Woodcock's debts and engagements, if he, the said Richard Woodcock, would assign the said premises unto the said William, reserving only a yearly rent of threescore pounds per annum during his life,—thereupon the said Richard Woodcock, by Indenture, did grant and let the said manor or farm unto the said William Woodcock.

Howbeit the said William Woodcock not only failed to pay the debts and engagements of his said father for him the said William, but also failed to pay to this defendant or her sister their several debts due as afore-said ; whereupon the said Richard Woodcock did grant, bargain or sell unto this defendant and her sister the said yearly rent of threescore pounds reserved and payable upon the said lease. And this defendant and her sister became interested of the said rent and did receive the same to their own uses.

The said Richard Woodcock then was very aged and sickly, and now is of the age of threescore and fourteen years, a prisoner for debt in the King's Bench as a surety for the said William Woodcock his son, and much decayed in body.

10.

Parish Register of St. George's, Southwark.

Burials. 6 February, 1640. Richard Woodcock, *Rule.*

11.

Will of George Humble, Citizen and Leatherseller of London, signed, 28 Sept., 1638, proved, 31 Dec., 1640. (164 Coventry.)

The testator desires that he may be buried in the church of St. Mary Woolnoth, and leaves fifty pounds to the parishioners of Hackney to found a charity. His principal legatees are his wife, Anne Humble, and his son, William Humble. He also bequeaths to his godson, John Sudbury, son of his late uncle, John Sudbury, five pounds to buy him a ring.

12.

Will of Katharine Sudbury of the Parish of St. Dunstan's in the East, widow, signed, 27 April, 1641, proved, 25 March, 1644. (21 Crane.)

"I give and bequeath to my daughter Elizabeth Woodcock the sum of ten pounds which I will shall be paid unto her and not to her husband upon her own acquittance. Item. I give and bequeath unto Katharine Woodcock her daughter the sum of forty Pounds, and to Elizabeth Woodcock also her daughter the sum of Thirty Pounds, and to Mary Woodcock and Honor Woodcock her two other daughters Tenne Pounds a peece. . . . And my express will and desire is that my Executrix hereafter named shall be kind and loving to my said daughter Elizabeth Woodcock, so that she may have as free entertainment in my now dwelling house as now and hitherto she hath had. . . . And I doe give and bequeath unto my grandchild Katharine Woodcock a ffeather bed and Bolster and also a little Chiste with all things to be found therein, the key of which Chiste I have already delivered to her."

Legacies to relatives called Conyers, and others, who include "Katharine Baldwin my daughter Woodcocks Mayde." Executrix, Katharine Wignall.

13.

Will of Anne Humble of Hackney in the County of Middlesex, widow, signed, 10 July, 1645, proved, 23 Oct., 1645. (122 Rivers.)

“ I give to my Cosen Woodcock and her foure children fortie pounds to be equally divided between them.”

14.

Woodcock v. Kiddall and Heath, Chancery Proceedings, Charles I., W. 54, 30.

30 January, 1644. The bill of Elizabeth Woodcock of London, relict of William Woodcock, late of London, gent., deceased, on behalf of herself and of Katharine Woodcock, Elizabeth Woodcock, Mary Woodcock and Honor Woodcock, infants and children of the said oratrix, sheweth that John Sudbury, late of London, gent., deceased, brother to the said oratrix, was in his lifetime seised in certain messuages, lands, tenements, woods, etc., in Clavering in the county of Essex, of the yearly value of about £160, sometime the lands of the said William Woodcock, husband of the oratrix, and part of which, to the value of £80, was assured to the oratrix as a jointure in case she should outlive her husband.

And about seven years since the said John Sudbury and the oratrix and her said husband sold the said lands to one John Heath of London for £1800; but John Heath not being able to pay the whole sum at once, it was agreed that he should retain £500 of the purchase money and pay interest thereon.

In May, 1639, John Sudbury died intestate in a country beyond the seas, being possessed of the writings concerning the said £500 and of other personal estate amounting to at least £1500, which by right ought to

belong to the oratrix and her said children, they being the next of kin.

But one Marmaduke Kiddall, hearing of the death of the said John Sudbury, combined with the said John Heath to defraud the oratrix of the estate, saying that John Sudbury made a will and appointed him sole executor; whereas the said John Sudbury never made a will, or, if he did, the said Marmaduke Kiddall was only a person appointed to manage the estate for the benefit of the oratrix and her children. But he has since received all the profits of the said estate, without giving any account of the same to the oratrix, and together with the said John Heath means to share the £500 and interest, and not to pay any part of the estate to the oratrix, or give up the deeds.

15.

Ibid. The several answer of Marmaduke Kiddall to the Bill of Complaint of Elizabeth Woodcock.

8 July, 1644. In February, 1639 John Sudbury took a journey into Kent, having just made his will in London, and left his will in a trunk in the house of one Askew, called the Swan, in Feversham. And John Sudbury, being afterwards employed as a soldier in the Scottish Expedition, died there; and this defendant, hearing of the death of the said John Sudbury, went to the said Askew's house, and there found the will of the said John Sudbury, written in his handwriting, and, on taking the same to London, showed it to the complainant.

By his will John Sudbury left to the complainant £10 a year during the life of her husband, William Woodcock, . . . to one Joan Gardiner £5, to his executors and overseers £30, and the remainder of his estate to be equally divided between his nieces Katharine Woodcock, Elizabeth Woodcock, Mary Woodcock and Honor

Woodcock, to be paid to them on their marriage or at the age of twenty-one.

This defendant conceives he is not bound to give complainant or her children any account of the said estate, she being neither executrix nor administratrix, nor any of her children of the age of twenty-one or married.

16.

Ibid. The several answer of John Heath to the Bill of Complaint of Elizabeth Woodcock.

29 August, 1644. This defendant purchased the manor called Bollingtons from John Sudbury for £1800, paying £1300 at once, and the remaining £500 was to remain in his hands, to pay off the incumbrances on the premises, and also to meet the costs of any suit at law with regard to the said premises.

And Roger Cotton commencing a suit at law concerning part of the premises, and the suit continuing for about four years, this defendant disbursed the sum of about £150.

If he may be discharged from the suit and have satisfaction for the sums disbursed, he will be ready to give an account of the sum of £500 left in his hands, but denies all other charges mentioned in the bill.

17.

Kiddall v. Woodcock and Heath, Chancery Proceedings, Reynardson, 288, 40.

The answer of John Heath to the Bill of Complaint of Marmaduke Kiddall.

20 June, 1648. The said John Heath does not know whether William Woodcock sold to John Sudbury the goods, chattels and household stuffs mentioned in the bill, neither does he know whether John Sudbury did admit William Woodcock and Elizabeth his wife to live

with him in his house, neither does he know anything of the acts between the said John Sudbury, William Woodcock and Elizabeth his wife, Henry Knagg and Katharine Sudbury, widow, mentioned in the bill.

18.

Chancery Decrees and Orders, 1649, B. Book, f. 126 d.

Woodcock v. Kiddall and Heath.

28 November, 1649. In pursuance of an order of the 29th of November, 1647, there was £250 brought into this Court by the defendant Heath, he having formerly paid the plaintiff £200, part of the debt by him owing upon the statute in question. In respect one of the children [Katharine] hath attained her age and is capable to receive her portion, it was prayed that the £250 in court might be delivered out to the said plaintiffs' mother and guardian, she giving security to answer the plaintiffs their portions at their several ages of twenty-one years,—whereupon it is ordered that the defendant Heath shall have notice hereof, and shall show cause in eight days after such notice why it should not be ordered as desired.

19.

Will of William Bowe, Merchant of London, signed; 26 Sept., 1651, proved, 29 Sept., 1651. (169 Grey.)

The testator leaves legacies to his sister-in-law, Honor Vyner, wife of Thomas Vyner, Alderman of London, and to his cousin, Elizabeth Woodcock of Hackney; William Humble of London to be executor.

20.

Parish Register of Hackney.

Burials. 20 Sept., 1652. Mrs Mary Woodcock.

21.

Parish Register of St. Mary's, Aldermanbury, 1656.

The Agreement and Intention of Marriage betweene John Milton Esqre. of the Parish of Margeretts in Westminster; And Mrs Katherine Woodcocke of the Parish of Marys Aldermanbury was published three several Markett Days in three several weeks (vizt.) on Monday the 22d and Monday the 27h of October and on Monday the 3d of November, and no exception being made against their Intentions; They were according to the Actt of Parliament, Married the 12th of November by Sir John Dethick Knight and Alderman one of the Justices of Peace for this Citty of London.

22.

Parish Register of St. Margaret's, Westminster.

Christenings. 19 Oct., 1657. Katherin Milton d. of John and Katherin. *This is Milton, Oliver's Secretary.*

Burials. 10 Feb., 1658. Mrs Katherin Milton.

20 March, 1658. Mrs Katherin Milton, *Ch.*

23.

Will of Joan Gardiner, signed, 12 July, 1658, proved, 13 April, 1659. (205 Pell.)

"I doe give unto my Cozin Mistress Elizabeth Woodcock and her two Daughters Mistris Elizabeth and Mistris Honour Woodcock All and singular my Messuages Lands Tenements and hereditaments whatsoever lying and being in the parish of Edgworth in the Countie of Hertford, and the division or distribution of it to be made at the Will and pleasure of Mistris Elizabeth Woodcock the Mother both how and when she shall judge fitt and convenient."

24.

Parish Register of St. Peter's, Cornhill.

Marriages. 9 Sept., 1658. Edmond Lynde of dower widdower And Elizabeth Woodcock Spinster of Hackney parish.

25.

Will of Sir Thomas Vyner, of the City of London, Knight and Baronet, signed, 17 March, 1665, proved, 19 May, 1665. (55 Hyde.)

"Item. my will is that my Cousin Elizabeth Woodcocke shall dwell in that part of my house in Hackney where she now liveth Rent free during her life. Item. I give to her daughter Honor Woodcocke my late wifes god-daughter Twenty pounds of currant English money."

26.

Will of Thomas Vyner, of Hackney in the County of Middlesex, Esq., signed, 25 Nov., 1666, proved, 3 Feb., 1667. (31 Carr.)

"Item. I give and bequeath unto my Cosen Elizabeth Woodcocke Widow and to her two daughters Elizabeth Lyne and Honor Woodcocke and to each of them Twenty pounds a peece to be paid them respectively within Six months next after my decease."

(The testator was the second son of Sir Thomas Vyner.)

27.

Will of Edmund Lynde, of Hackney in the County of Middlesex, gent., signed, 29 March, 1670, proved, 13 May, 1670. (61 Penn.)

The testator bequeaths his lands and tenements at Hackney to his wife Elizabeth, her unborn child, and

elder children, Edmund, George and Honor. He mentions a bond entered into before his marriage with Sir William Humble and Elizabeth Woodcock, widow, mother of his wife.

"Item. I give and bequeath unto my loving Sister in Lawe Honor Woodcocke the sum of fforty pounds of lawfull English money. . . . Item. I give and bequeath unto my said Mother in Lawe Elizabeth Woodcocke The sum of Ten Shillings to buy her a ring. Item. I give and bequeath unto Katherine Baldwin my said Mother in Lawe her Antient maid servant Tenn shillings to buy her a Ring."

28.

Will of Elizabeth Lynde of Hackney in the County of Middlesex, widow, signed, 15 June, 1670, proved, 20 June, 1670. (79 Penn.)

Four children are mentioned, Edmund, George, Honor, and Robert.

"Item. I do give unto my Mother Mrs. Elizabeth Woodcock my little Silver Collett-can, which she hath at present in her possession. Item. I do give unto my Sister Mrs Honour Woodcock my Diamond Ring. Item. I do give unto my loveing friend Katherine Bauldwin one of my mourning Rings, and I make and ordaine my deare Mother Mrs. Elizabeth Woodcocke of Hackney in the County of Middlesex Widdow and my dear Sister Mrs Honour Woodcocke of Hackney aforesaid my full and joyned Executrixes."

29.

Parish Register of Hackney.

Burials. 30 June, 1673. Mrs Elizabeth Woodcock

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